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Powerful Feelings: Emotional Practices of the Tudor Court in Early Modern Literary Culture

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Powerful Feelings: Emotional Practices of the Tudor Court in Early Modern Literary Culture

by

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

December 2011

Dedication

To Mom and Dad, for helping me start.

To Jenny and Olivia, for helping me finish.

Acknowledgements

My deepest debt is to Frank Whigham, my mentor, advocate, and friend; his patient guidance, unflagging encouragement, and remarkable mind have shaped my intellectual, professional, and personal development in ways impossible to enumerate. I cannot thank him enough. Wayne Rebhorn has guided me throughout the entirety of my graduate career; his careful attention to my work has greatly sharpened my thinking and my prose. Jorie Woods has inspired me with her curious, daring, and meticulous scholarship; her advice and support have been invaluable. Jason Powell has been generous beyond belief with his time, energy, and expertise; I hope one day to be able to repay him. James Loehlin has taught me much about Shakespeare—but he has taught me more about how to engage any text with an agile and penetrating eye. Brian Levack has helped me develop the skills of a professional scholar, and has enabled me to see my work in new and exciting ways.

In addition to the members of my committee, my colleagues, instructors, and friends at the University of Texas at Austin have been instrumental to the development of this work. I especially thank Sam Baker, J. K. Barrett, Mary Blockley, Douglas Bruster, Elizabeth Cullingford, Ann Cvetkovich, Linda Ferreira-Buckley, Greg Foran, Beth Hedrick, Wayne Lesser, Jason Leubner, Eric Mallin, Lindsey Schell, Patricia Schaub, Molly Schwartzburg, Amy Douglas Stewart, and Hannah Wojciehowski.

I have benefited enormously from the generosity of scholars elsewhere. I owe much to William Carroll, Jean Deathridge, Victoria Goodwin, Steve Gunn, Paul Hammer, Peter Herman, Paulina Kewes, Scott Lucas, Chris Martin, Steve May, Gail Kern Paster, Will

Rossiter, Gary D. Sherman, Ray Siemens, James Siemon, Alan Stewart, Owen Williams, and Heather Wolfe.

I am especially indebted to the friendship of Hala Herbly, Jessica Kilgore, and Noël Clare Radley, each of whom have made finishing this project possible.

This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

Powerful Feelings: Emotional Practices of the Tudor Court in Early Modern Literary Culture

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2011

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Uniting literary analysis, theories of affect from the sciences and humanities, and an archival-based account of Tudor history, this project examines how literature reflects and constructs the emotional dynamics of life in the Renaissance courtly sphere—with hopes of showing why emotionality, as a primary mode through which historical subjects embody and engage their world, should be adopted as a fundamental lens of social and textual analysis. Spanning the 16th Century, chapters on John Skelton and Henrician satire, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, Sir Philip Sidney and Elizabethan pageantry, and the Essex circle demonstrate how the dynamics of disgust, envy, frustration, and dread guide literary production in the early modern court. By aligning Renaissance discourses of emotion with current trends in empirical and theoretical research, the study provides a new context for an "affective" analysis of literature.

Table of Contents

Textual Notes ..... **x**

Introduction **1**

Chapter 1:
The Emotional Practice of *Disgust*: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey **14**

"From the donge carte" – The Rise of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey 15

A Brief History of Disgust 22

The Disgusting Wolsey 32

The Fall of Cardinal Wolsey 47

Chapter 2:
The Emotional Practice of *Envy*: Surrey, Richmond, and the Rivalrous Emotions **62**

The Life and Death of Henry Fitzroy 66

The Practice of Envy 74

The Practice of Jealousy 84

Finding Grief 89

Chapter 3:
The Emotional Practice of *Frustration*: Leicester, Sidney, and the 1570s **95**

Why So Frustrated? 98

Into the Wild 109

The Forester 115

Robin Hood 119

The Wildman 125

Hercules 134

Leicester and Sidney, Entertainers 141

Kenilworth, 1575 141

Woodstock, 1575 151

The Lady of May, 1578 155

In From the Wild 165

Chapter 4:
The Emotional Practice of *Dread*: The Earl of Essex and the 1590s 170
THE LAST FAVORITE 177
COSMIC DREAD 182
SOCIAL DREAD 193
The Earl of Essex and His Friends 198
The Earl of Essex and His Enemies 211
INNER DREAD 231
References 243

Textual Notes

List of Abbreviations:

AEP	George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy*, ed. Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).
A&P	Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
BL	The British Library, London.
CP	Cecil Papers, Hatfield House, Hertfordshire.
CSPF	*Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Papers, of the Reign of Elizabeth*, ed. Allan James Crosby *et al.*, 23 vols. (London, 1863-1950).
CSPS	*Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*, ed. G.A. Bergenroth *et al.,* 13 vols. (London, 1862-1954).
CSPV	*Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy*, ed. Rawdon Brown *et al*., 40 vols. (London, 1864–1947).
Folger	Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C.
HMC Salisbury	*Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury, Preserved at Hatfield House,* ed. Historical Manuscript Commission, 23 vols. (London, 1883–1973).
L&P	*Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, ed. J.S. Brewer *et. al,* 23 vols. (London, 1862-1932).
SPC	Mervyn James, *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
TNA	The National Archives, Kew.

All quotations from Shakespeare are cited from *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1997). All biblical quotations are cited from *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, ed. Lloyd Eason Berry (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

When quoting from manuscripts, I have aimed for semi-diplomatic transcription; expansions are indicated in italics. When necessary for the sake of clarity, minor punctuation has been silently added.

Documents from the Cecil Papers, Hatfield House are quoted with the kind permission of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury.

Introduction

This dissertation is an attempt to imagine the emotional atmosphere of the sixteenth-century English court, and to imagine the emotional experience of the sixteenth-century English courtier. Textual forms, in their capacity to record the contours of early modern emotionality, provide the spark for my imaginings. Uniting literary analysis, theories of affect from the sciences and humanities, and an archival-based account of Tudor history, this project examines how literature reflects and constructs the emotional dynamics of life in the Renaissance courtly sphere. Such an endeavor, I suggest, is vital to the future of historicist scholarship, the hostility of which to psychoanalysis has led to a largely inadequate account of how individuated, idiographic subjects emerge from the institutional mechanisms of ideological interpellation. I attempt to situate the emotional subject within the realm of literature and politics, with hopes of showing why emotionality, as a primary mode through which historical subjects embody and engage their world, should be adopted as a fundamental lens of social and textual analysis.

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For nearly thirty years the study of Renaissance literature has been entwined with the study of Renaissance culture, a critical orientation that grids early modern literary works within a larger matrix of social structures, contestatory powers, and cultural contexts. Yet as the theoretical wells of traditional New Historicism run increasingly dry, a central question becomes pressing for those of us invested in historicist scholarship: what will the next era hold for historically-inflected literary

and cultural studies? This dissertation marks my initial attempt to formulate an answer to this question, by envisioning one such future for the descendants of New Historicism.[1]

It is my sense that historicist literary scholarship might be energized by turning its attention in force to a new critical endeavor: unpacking the *precise* role of emotion in textual and social life. The last three decades have witnessed an "affective turn" in many corners of the sciences and humanities, where a vast body of scholarship is redefining the centrality of emotion to human experience, and how our condition as a social animal is endlessly entwined with our condition as an emotional one.[2] Though this perhaps seems self-evident, the matter is one of relative emphasis: emerging from a context of post-Enlightenment rationalism, much modern social analysis has taken emotionality for granted, ignoring it as an object of serious inquiry in its own right. But while many social scientists "were late to recognize the importance of the topic," researchers and theorists now find emotion to be "a crucial link between micro and macro levels of social reality."[3] As such, it is fertile ground for us to seed a new approach to the study of textual and cultural interaction.

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[1] "Historical formalism," which seems to be currently positioning itself as the dominant heir to New Historicism, promises to wed cultural investigation with sensitivity to the historical contours of literary form. As will become apparent, my investments lie elsewhere, though there is no denying the benefit of "engag[ing] the complex question of form" in literary studies. See Stephen Cohen, ed., *Shakespeare and Historical Formalism* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), p. 2 and Mark David Rasmussen, ed., *Renaissance Literature and Its Formal Engagements* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

[2] A note on terminology. There is considerable debate, in virtually every applicable field, regarding the distinction between *emotion* and *affect*—if there is indeed a meaningful distinction at all. Insofar as it's possible to identify, the general trend (particularly in the sciences) labels *emotion* a cognitive, socially elaborated experience belonging to the larger phenomenological category of *affect*, which also includes those feelings of a more purely biological/physiological nature—but this is not universal, and scholars in the humanities often use the terms interchangeably. Because, as will become clear, I am interested in the range of experiences associated with emotionality, I do not attempt to differentiate between *emotion* and *affect* in this dissertation.

[3] Jonathan H. Turner and Jan E. Stets, *The Sociology of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 1.

In the humanities, recent studies of emotion have been equally generative. For critical theorists, Kathleen Woodward notes, such developments are promising precisely because they are not "underwritten by major theoretical developments such as Foucauldian genealogy or Derridean deconstruction"; as such, the turn to emotion offers a welcome opportunity for fresh approaches and innovative scholarship in the domain of cultural studies more generally.[4] This unfettered quality makes emotion especially valuable to the analysis of the individual subject within the social field, insofar as it enables "new efforts to think the relation between the psychic and the social without the orthodoxies of psychoanalysis but with its sophisticated appreciation for the complexities of psychic life."[5] The interplay of the emotional subject and the sociopolitical world that shapes it has sparked new conversations in feminism, queer theory, and trauma studies, and emotion has been the governing term in a variety of recent monographs in the discipline of literary

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[4] Kathleen Woodward, "Global Cooling and Academic Warming: Long-Term Shifts in Emotional Weather," *American Literary History* 8 (1996): 761. On the affective turn in the humanities, see, for instance, Linda J. Nicholson, *The Play of Reason: From the Modern to the Postmodern* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean O'Malley Halley, eds., *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); and Kristyn Gorton, "Desire, Duras, and Melancholia: Theorizing Desire After The 'Affective Turn,'" *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 16-33.

[5] Janet Staiger, Ann Cvetkovich, and Ann Reynolds, eds., *Political Emotions* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 5. As suggested above, accounting for psychic mechanisms is particularly crucial to the future of historicist scholarship. Julia M. Walker, in *Medusa's Mirrors: Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and the Metamorphosis of the Female Self* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), describes the antagonism of New Historicism and psychoanalysis as "a Hundred Years War between factions of scholars and critics" (p. 20). For the *locus classicus* of the New Historicist objection, see Stephen Greenblatt, "Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture," in *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 210-24. Though psychoanalysis seems to have lost this war, there is still a robust body of early modern scholarship with a psychoanalytic bent; see, for example Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Philip Armstrong, *Shakespeare's Visual Regime: Tragedy, Psychoanalysis, and the Gaze* (New York: Palgrave, 2000); Elizabeth J. Bellamy, *Translations of Power: Narcissism and the Unconscious in Epic History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); and Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002). For an attempt to bridge the divide, see Carla Mazzio and Douglas Trevor, eds., *Historicism, Psychoanalysis, and Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

studies generally.[6] The affective turn has birthed a subfield known as "public feelings," an interdisciplinary collective that devotes attention to "the study of sentimentality, trauma, intimacy, cultural formations that are organized around affective life, the gendering of affect, the relation between sexuality and emotion, cultural memory, and more."[7] By challenging "how the division between public and private spheres has problematically confined feelings and emotional life to the domain of the personal and private," scholars in this mode are revealing the important political stakes of emotionality—a move that informs my treatment of emotion in the early modern court.

Emotion, of course, has never been absent from Renaissance studies, and there has been careful attention to particular areas of early modern emotional thought, such as attitudes toward grief, or the pervasive discourse of melancholia.[8] However, recent projects such as Gail Kern

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[6] For recent non-Renaissance literary studies of emotion, see, for example, Kristin Boudreau, *Sympathy in American Literature: American Sentiments from Jefferson to the Jameses* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002); Joseph Fichtelberg, *Critical Fictions: Sentiment and the American Market, 1780-1870* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003); Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Thomas Pfau, *Romantic Moods: Paranoia, Trauma, and Melancholy, 1790-1840* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Gesa Stedman, *Stemming the Torrent: Expression and Control in the Victorian Discourses on Emotion, 1830-1872* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002); Peta Tait, *Performing Emotions: Gender, Bodies, Spaces, in Chekhov's Drama and Stanislavski's Theatre* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002); Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Inge Crosman Wimmers, *Proust and Emotion: The Importance of Affect in La Recherche Du Temps Perdu* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); Jane Wood, *Passion and Pathology in Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

[7] *Political Emotions*, p. 2, for this and the following quotation. This recent essay collection is an excellent introduction to the emerging field. See also Cvetkovich's "Public Feelings," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 2007 (106): 459-68, and the "Public Sentiments" special issue of *The Scholar & Feminist Online* (Vol. 2, 2003), edited by Cvetkovich and Ann Pellegrini. <http://barnard.edu/sfonline/ps/>

[8] On grief, see Heather Dubrow, *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss: Forms of Deprivation, Mourning, and Recuperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); G. W. Pigman, *Grief and English Renaissance Elegy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); and Margo Swiss and David A. Kent, eds., *Speaking Grief in English Literary Culture: Shakespeare to Milton* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2002). On melancholy, see Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England*

Paster's *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (2004), her edited collection (with Katherine Rowe and Mary-Floyd Wilson) *Reading the Early Modern Passions* (2004), and Jennifer C. Vaught's *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern Literature* (2008) have begun to interrogate emotions more broadly.[9] These efforts, which unite many of the more prominent areas of inquiry in the last two decades of early modern studies (such as notions of interiority, gender, and embodiment), historicize our account of Renaissance emotionality, by demonstrating how historical discourses of affect (such as humoral physiology or theories of the passions) governed early modern emotional experience.[10]

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); William E. Engel, *Mapping Mortality: The Persistence of Memory and Melancholy in Early Modern England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995); Lynn Enterline, *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholia and Masculinity in Early Modern Writing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995); and Douglas Trevor, *The Poetics of Melancholy in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[9] Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004*);* Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson*,* eds., *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); and Jennifer C. Vaught, *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008). See also Catherine Bates, *Masculinity, Gender and Identity in the English Renaissance Lyric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Cora Fox, *Ovid and the Politics of Emotion in Elizabethan England* (New York: Palgrave, 2009); and L.E. Semler's review essay "The Renaissance Gets Emotional," *Metascience* 16 (2007): 137-41.

[10] Work on gender, of course, remains too numerous to mention. For treatments of interiority, see Katherine Maus, "Proof and Consequences: Inwardness and Its Exposure in the English Renaissance," *Representations* 34 (1991): 29-52; ibid., *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Elizabeth Hanson, *Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Christopher Pye, *The Vanishing: Shakespeare, the Subject, and Early Modern Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); and Michael Carl Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). These works emerged largely in response to a set of influential books, published during the early developments of New Historicism and Cultural Materialism, which suggested that notions of interiority and autonomous subjectivity largely emerged as a post-Renaissance phenomenon. See Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (New York: Methuen, 1984); Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology, and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1984); and Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (New York: Methuen, 1985). Earlier still,

This dissertation emerges from, and hopes to contribute to, this growing body of scholarship. My project, however, has a different theoretical anchor from such approaches, which tend to focus primarily on recovering the historical phenomenology of emotion by historicizing early modern discourses of affect. While my emphasis is still quite historicist, I posit emotion not only as an *object* of historical inquiry—that is, not only as a set of discourses to be historicized—but rather as the *method* of inquiry itself, via a hermeneutical mode that employs modern research traditions to understand emotion in its historically specific elaborations. In other words, my primary aim is not to historicize the features of emotionality in the early modern experience, but rather to use the features of emotionality *to* historicize early modern experience more broadly: I am concerned not so much with how early modern subjects understood a sentiment like disgust (for example), but rather with how a model of disgust can inform our understanding of how they (and the texts they construct) engaged their social world. To do so, I adopt an understanding of emotionality informed largely by the modern research tradition of the affective turn, which I then bring to bear on my analysis of Tudor courtly literature. Emotion, much like ideology, is soaked into every corner of human engagement. As a primary dynamic of both textual construction and social interaction, it may thus serve as a central lens of analysis, as described here and modeled in the chapters themselves. By emphasizing the emotional underpinnings of literary and social encounters, this dissertation tries to demonstrate how to perform an "affective" reading of such

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Anne Ferry discussed poetic interiority in *The "Inward" Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

For representative treatments of the body, see Lynn Enterline, *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Jonathan Gil Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); David Hillman and Carla Mazzio, eds., *The Body in Part: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995); and, most foundationally, Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

phenomena, in much the same way that one performs a Marxist, feminist, or psychoanalytic reading.

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An approach of this type might well raise an immediate concern: what can we really *know* about early modern emotions, and about the texts in which they are encoded? This is a recapitulation of the objection commonly levied against psychoanalysis, which (with good reason) insists that we have no real access to the interiority of early modern subjects, and that it is naïve to assume that such can be extracted from a textual record.

My response, most basically, is to challenge the question's premise. That we cannot *prove* that textuality reflects the emotional states of early modern subjects should not trouble us—any more than we are troubled by the fact that we cannot finally *prove* that the corruption of Lear's speech reflects the corruption of his sanity, or that the Bower of Bliss encodes English fantasies of colonial mastery, or that Satan is the vehicle of Milton's didactic aims. There are precise corners of our field in which criteria of proof are paramount—bibliographical and textual studies come to mind—but I see my project invoking the more general prerogative of literary and cultural studies: we approach objects and make arguments about them, with the hope that what we have to say proves a valuable way to think about those objects and their place in the world. Longinus can't prove his theories of the sublime; Empson can't prove his theories of ambiguity; Spivak can't prove her theories of the subaltern—but what matters is that such theories, whatever their epistemological status, help us think through literary and cultural problems. I am happy to admit that I know nothing certain about the emotional life of the early modern courtier—but I do have some theories about what it may have been like, and I do think those theories can help us read the literary texts that emerged from the courtly sphere. As David Hillman observes, in response to the traditional New Historicist emphasis on the inscrutable *otherness* of the past, the "inaccessibility of

the other needn't entail giving up the attempt to know the other—only the renunciation of the kind of epistemological knowing that demands certifiable evidence or proof."[11]

For to insist absolutely on historical otherness, G.W. Pigman argues, nullifies "the similarities between [trans-historical] people that make understanding possible" at all—leaving little reason for analysis in the first place.[12] This debate obviously bears upon my project, insofar as I am suggesting that modern theoretical, philosophical, and empirical approaches to emotionality might have something to tell us about the emotional lives of men and women in the Tudor age. Most immediately, the fact that literature is an object of study suggests a continuity that puts us in touch with the emotional experience of the past. We are affected by Othello's jealousy, Juliet's love, and Hamlet's despair precisely because we understand something of them, and recognize them in ourselves—even if, at the same time, we have trouble accessing the early modern emotional matrix that allows Thomas Nashe to wonder rhetorically, "who spurneth not at a dead dogge?"[13]

But more specifically, certain features of emotionality may make the affective turn especially suited to help bridge the theoretical divide between scholars like Hillman and Pigman and those to whom they are responding. This is because the most sophisticated contemporary treatments of emotion acknowledge it to be a phenomenon with certain properties that are transhistorical *and* certain properties that are inflected by history and culture. Although "there is too much evidence supporting the universality of many emotions and their expression across cultures to sustain the claim that all emotions are socially constructed"—because the "activation,

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[11] Lynn Enterline and David Hillman, "Other Selves, Other Bodies," *Shakespeare Studies* 33 (2005): 65. (This is a dialogue; the words are Hillman's.)

[12] G.W. Pigman, "Limping Examples: Exemplarity, the New Historicism, and Psychoanalysis," in *Creative Imitation: New Essays on Renaissance Literature in Honor of Thomas M. Greene*, ed. David Quint, Margaret W. Ferguson, G. W. Pigman, and Wayne A. Rebhorn (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1992), p. 289.

[13] Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse His Supplication to the Devil*, in *The Works of Thomas Nashe,* ed. Ronald B. McKerrow, 5 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), 1:155. *Spurn* means *to kick.*

experience, and expression of emotions are intimately connected to the body" that we share trans-historically and cross-culturally—there is equally no doubt that affective experience is shaped by "socially constructed cultural definitions and constraints on what emotions should be experienced and expressed in a situation" and by those "linguistic labels provided by culture to internal sensations."[14] Turner and Stets summarize how emotionality occupies a theoretical space between rigid essentialism and radical constructivism:

> People occupy positions in social structures and play roles guided by cultural scripts. They are able to do so because of their cognitive capacities to perceive and appraise the situation (its structure and culture), themselves (as objects), others, and their own physiological responses. Emotions are ultimately aroused by the activation of body systems. This arousal generally comes from cognitive appraisals of self in relation to others, social structure, and culture. Once activated, emotions will be constrained by cognitive processes and culture.[15]

An emotional playbook is hardwired into the neuroanatomy of the *Homo sapiens*—but the particular calling of those plays, and the social meaning that attaches to them, is endlessly refracted through the lens of history and culture. In its capacity to help account for both historical sameness and historical difference, emotionality, it seems to me, is a perfect instrument to be added to the historicist toolbox of literary and cultural scholars.

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In this project, I attempt to demonstrate how this tool might be used. In each of the four chapters that follow, I focus on a particular emotion, and suggest how its affective properties can help illuminate a particular literary and social nexus in the sixteenth-century courtly sphere. My intent is not to be exhaustive; there were, undoubtedly, countless emotional configurations that circulated in the Tudor court, and I treat only four. I do think, however, that the affective set I investigate—*disgust, envy, frustration,* and *dread*—featured prominently in the emotional

[14] Turner and Stets, *The Sociology of Emotions*, p. 3; 9.

[15] Ibid, p. 10.

atmosphere of Renaissance court culture, and the practice of these emotions deeply shaped the subjective experience of the early modern courtier. I deem the object of my inquiry *emotional practice* because of the multitude of concurrent associations that the phrase activates: *practice* entails notions of social experience as it is lived; of habitual action; of anticipation and preparation; of regulative norms; of professional conduct; of legal proceedings; and, in the early modern period especially, of schemes, treasons, and treacheries.[16] The Tudor court was host to social encounters in which all such meanings were pertinent—and emotionality guided the precise forms that these meanings and encounters took.

Beginning with the early reign of King Henry VIII, my opening chapter considers the literary portrayal of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, the much-hated *alter rex* who gripped English politics for nearly two decades. With their insistent images of illness, appetite, and intrusion, I argue that contemporary slanders and satires of Wolsey—such as Skelton's *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*, Tyndale's *The Practice of Prelates*, and Roy and Barlowe's *Rede Me And Be Not Wroth*—are animated by a core notion of *disgust,* a primal response through which Wolsey is cast as a physical and social blight contaminating both King Henry and the commonweal. Dubbed "the gatekeeper emotion" by modern affect theorists, disgust is the sentiment by which the private body guards itself against material contaminants, and the social body guards itself against moral pollution; anti-Wolsey satire, I suggest, exemplifies this connection, by exposing the Cardinal as compromised twice over. Despite Wolsey's profound role in shaping his early reign, King Henry ultimately fulfills the trajectory of disgust anticipated by the poets, diagnosing the now-abject cardinal as a foreign pathogen and purging him from the symbolic body of the court.

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[16] See *OED*, "practice, *n.,*" for the extraordinary range of meanings. Bourdieu, of course, is the great social theorist of practice; see, for example, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) and *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

In the second chapter, I explore the poetry of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey—a man who found time, during his short, volatile life in the highest echelon of Henrician court culture, to produce some of the greatest poetic achievements of his age. The son of the realm's senior peer, Surrey was groomed from his earliest days to expect a central role in England's political scene; he guarded this birthright fiercely, ultimately orchestrating his own undoing in the reign's tense final weeks. As an adolescent, Surrey established a deep friendship with Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond—King Henry's illegitimate son, who many thought would, despite his bastardy, one day wear the crown. Such hopes were cut short by Richmond's sudden death at the age of nineteen; this event proved devastating to Surrey, who memorialized his friend in one of the most remarkable elegies of the English Renaissance, "So crewell prison." Despite the poignancy of Surrey's tribute, I argue that the poem has a far more complex emotional architecture than is usually recognized. The elegy, I suggest, enacts an ambivalent fantasy of royal interpenetration, in which the distinction between Howard and Tudor is simultaneously affirmed and effaced—leading to a contested emotional dynamic of emulation, rivalry, and qualified love. In this chapter I unpack the emotional ambivalence of the poem, in which obvious sentiments of tenderness, friendship, and grief are challenged by a submerged affective register of *envy*.

Turning to the reign of Elizabeth I, I argue in the third chapter that the management of *frustration* was a crucial activity in the Tudor court, and that its strategic regulation was a key tool in the courtier's arsenal. Employing recent work in queer theory and related disciplines, I demonstrate the opportunity for peer-bonding based on failure and disaffection, and suggest that there were social and psychic advantages to being perceived as alienated, discontented, or oppositional in the context of early modern politics. As a test-case for my study, I consider how Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (Queen Elizabeth's great favorite) and his nephew Sir Philip Sidney embed their own frustration in a series of royal pageants in the 1570s: performative moments

designed primarily for the queen's pleasure, but that nonetheless advocate a political agenda sharply opposed to her current policy. In these entertainments—which, like Sidney's *The Lady of May,* were staged in the wooded grounds of aristocratic estates—I suggest that Leicester and his partisans perform their collective discontent by embracing the early modern discourse of wildness. By associating themselves with a dangerous, frenetic energy—and thus announcing their own incompatibility with the Elizabethan symbolic universe—Leicester and Sidney craft texts that anticipate, and even argue for, the frustration of their deliberative aims: by conscribing the terms of their own failure, these pageants deflate the queen's nominal authority to guide the poetic moment, allowing frustration and failure to be seized retroactively as a sign of triumph and integrity. Prior to the rise of pastoralism (which would, after 1579, become the sanctioned mode of disaffection in the courtly sphere), discontented courtiers in the 1570s looked to wildness as a site of virility, autonomy, and oppositional energy, in which they might imagine an antisocial alternative to Elizabeth's court, even within texts overtly designed for royal flattery.

My concluding chapter considers perhaps the final defining moment of the Tudor dynasty: the Earl of Essex's rising in early 1601. What affective state, I ask, drove Essex and his men to such a desperate action, and how did it emerge from the courtly experience of the decade that preceded it? In this chapter, I argue that the 1590s were marked by a collective mood of *dread*, in which a litany of social factors installed a cloud of terror and anxiety over the courtly sphere. Yet dread is not simply fear: in early modern usage, words like *dread* and *dreadful* equally denote a terrifying object and the subject it terrifies, an ambiguity that reflects the affective ambivalence between Elizabeth's courtiers and their own *dread sovereign.* Drawing upon a wealth of manuscript evidence, I argue that the struggle for the Elizabethan court in the 1590s was a struggle to control the definition of dread—one in which Essex and many of his followers would finally pay a dreadful price.

These case-studies, I hope, will provide new insights into the dynamics of the sixteenth-century courtly sphere. But my larger aim is to provide a sense of why emotions should matter to our thinking, and why emotions can help us explore the early modern period in innovative and exciting ways.

Chapter 1: The Emotional Practice of *Disgust*: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey

Insofar as there's a villain in Shakespeare's *King Henry VIII*, it is Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, the domineering royal minister whose arrogance and treachery pervade the first half of the play. "The devil speed him!" exclaims his chief adversary, Edward, Duke of Buckingham, "No man's pie is freed / From his ambitious finger."[1] Shakespeare's portrayal of a churlish, self-interested cardinal emerges from a pool of anti-Wolsey sentiment that had festered in England for nearly a century—and that has, despite some recent revisionist efforts, shaped much of the subsequent historical tradition.[2] I begin my study of emotion in the Tudor court by considering one aspect of how this reputation was generated: the portrayal of Wolsey in Henrician literary culture. With their insistent images of revulsion, appetite, and infection, contemporary satires of Wolsey—such as Skelton's *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*, Roy and Barlowe's *Rede Me And Be Nott Wrothe,* and a variety of anti-Wolsey ballads—are animated by a core affective energy: the emotion of disgust, a primal response through which the cardinal is cast as a physical and spiritual blight, perilously infecting both King Henry and the commonweal.

In this chapter, I suggest that the dynamics of disgust, as articulated by modern researchers in the humanities and sciences, can help us situate Wolsey's place in the Henrician imagination. As the governor of ingestion and rejection, disgust is a key force in the emotional arsenal that was fielded against Wolsey; as we will see, contemporary attacks insistently invoke the rhetoric of disgust in their attempts to discredit the cardinal and his political influence. Furthermore, this sentiment of disgust ultimately guides the terms of Wolsey's ruin: despite his profound role in

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[1] *KHVIII* 1.1.52-53.

[2] For this revisionist account, see Peter Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey* (London: Pimlico, 1992) [hereafter cited as *KC*]. This, the most recent and thorough scholarly biography of Wolsey, has greatly informed this chapter.

shaping the first half of Henry's reign—in which he is so fully incorporated into the body politic that he is often indistinguishable from the king—the cardinal is finally imagined as a sickness of the *res publica,* a disease that is only cured by purging him from the symbolic body of the court.

An assessment of Cardinal Wolsey is paramount to any understanding of the Henrician court, and of early sixteenth-century political culture more generally. In the first half of the reign of King Henry VIII, there was no subject more powerful than Wolsey, the Lord Chancellor and papal legate whose meteoric rise in 1512 was capped by an equally spectacular fall in 1529. During the years of his ascendency, Wolsey extended his reach into virtually every facet of English monarchal politics—a political mastery that was not unnoticed by contemporaries, for whom he assumed the qualities of *alter rex.*[3] Having little of his father's taste for bureaucratic tasks, the young King Henry left much of his realm's daily operation to Wolsey, whose control of the Great Seal ensured that his own court at Hampton was in many ways an unmatched administrative and political center. I begin this chapter by reviewing Wolsey's career, to contextualize the opposition that emerged to his unrivaled power.

"FROM THE DONGE CARTE" – THE RISE OF CARDINAL THOMAS WOLSEY

"Cardinal Wolsey," so writes George Cavendish, the cardinal's former usher and contemporary biographer, "was an honest poor man's son, born in Ipswich within the County of Suffolk."[4] Though few, it seems safe to say, imagined that a butcher's son would grow to become the most formidable subject in England, Wolsey apparently showed a remarkable early promise: in

[3] Wolsey was deemed *alter rex* by Venetian ambassador Antonio Surian in 1519; see *CSPV,* II, 1296.

[4] George Cavendish, *The Life and Death of Cardinal* Wolsey; for this text, see *Two Tudor Lives: The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey and The Life of Sir Thomas More*, ed. Richard S. Sylvester and Davis P. Harding (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 4-5. In addition to Gwyn's *KC*, see also A.F. Pollard, *Wolsey: Church and State in Sixteenth-Century England* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) and Sybil M. Jack's *ODNB* entry.

1486 he took his BA from Oxford at just fifteen years old, earning him the moniker "boy bachelor." As he continued his studies, he advanced to fellow and eventually dean of his alma mater Magdalen College; he then turned his attention to an ecclesiastical career, taking his first benefice in 1501 at Limington and gradually acquiring more over the next decade. After securing a position as royal chaplain to Henry VII (and aligning himself with Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester), Wolsey made his first ventures into the political realm, embarking on notable ambassadorial journeys to the Low Countries and Scotland in 1508.[5]

At the death of Henry VII, the thirty-six year old Wolsey was named almoner to the new king; by 1511, he was a fixture in Henry VIII's council, starting the rise to power that would see, by the end of 1515, the butcher's son named archbishop of York, cardinal, and Lord Chancellor.[6] As Cavendish records, King Henry, who lacked his father's passion for bureaucracy, was happy to grant his cardinal the daily operation of the realm:

> [Wolsey was eager] to disburden the King of so weighty a charge and troublesome business, putting the King in comfort that he shall not need to spare any time of his pleasure for any business that should necessarily happen on the council, as long as he, being there, having the King's authority and commandment, doubted not to see things sufficiently furnished and perfected.[7]

Wolsey gradually installed himself as head minister and proxy to the king, displacing the *de facto* series of conciliar checks that had developed in the first years of the new reign.[8]

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[5] According to Cavendish, Wolsey made a most favorable impression with the speed of his journey to the court of Emperor Maximilian —a round trip that lasted less than four days, and that left King Henry VII "in a great confuse and wonder of his hasty speed" (*The Life and Death,* p. 9).

[6] Almoners, fundamentally, collected and distributed alms; they are also associated with collecting the forfeits of a suicide. The position in the royal household was often a springboard to higher honors. See R. A. Houston, "What did the Royal Almoner do in Britain and Ireland, c.1450-1700?," *The English Historical Review* 125 (2010): 279-313.

[7] Cavendish, *The Life and Death,* p. 13.

[8] On the early reign of Henry VIII, and Wolsey's place in it, see David Starkey, *Henry: Virtuous Prince* (London: Harper Press, 2008).

The cardinal's career enjoyed another crescendo in 1518: after a series of maneuverings, he was named papal legate *a latere*, making him England's foremost ecclesiastical authority.[9] That year Wolsey also secured his greatest diplomatic coup to date: the so-called "treaty of perpetual peace," a pact in which Europe's leading political players agreed to cease (at least temporarily) the nationalist conflicts that had for the last decade fractured the Christian world. Though Henry received nominal credit for the proceedings, Wolsey was widely acknowledged as the true architect; in the flattering words of Erasmus, it was the cardinal who "cemented with such close-knit treaties that peace which all the greatest monarchs had long desired."[10]

Over the next decade, Wolsey would continue to guide English policy—especially as it concerned the ever-warring powers in Europe, whose enthusiasm for peace quickly waned. England forged ties first with Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1521), before defecting to his rival Francis I of France (1527); with such flexible commitments, the cardinal hoped to keep Henry a player on the international scene, while blocking either of the superpowers from achieving real supremacy. At the same time, Wolsey was occupied with tending fires at home (such as widespread resentment to the levies that funded his foreign endeavors), and soon enough, matters foreign and domestic became perilously entwined, in a thread that would unravel the very fabric of Henrician court and culture.

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[9] To become legate *a latere*—that is, legate "from the side" of the Pope—was to reach the highest echelon of the church hierarchy besides the Pope himself; the word of the legate *a latere*, in theory, was to be regarded as if it had come from the Pope's mouth. With this appointment, Wolsey was confirmed the highest ranking cleric in England, even though his archbishopric of York was, by itself, subordinate to William Warham's archbishopric of Canterbury. For a copy of the announcement, see BL, Cotton MS Vitellius B/III, fol. 267.

[10] Erasmus, *The Correspondence of Erasmus,* ed. RAB Mynors *et al.,* 11 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974-2011), 6:366.

That's because sometime in the middle of the 1520s, King Henry had become enamored with a woman named Anne Boleyn—and the rest, they say, is history.[11] It's difficult to assess Wolsey's initial role in the scheme that unfolded; some contemporaries saw "the Cardinal as the cause…of the intended divorce," while Cavendish claims that Wolsey made "persuasion to the contrary…upon his knees" after learning of Henry's plan.[12] Reluctant or not, however, the cardinal was to play point on this mission, and it was an inability to secure his master's wish that ultimately secured his own downfall. It does seem that he tried in earnest: Wolsey and his agents spent months canvassing possible grounds for the separation, and in May 1527 he convened a secret, exploratory trial at Westminster to adjudge the spiritual validity of the king's current marriage to Katherine of Aragon. Initial arguments, on both the spiritual legality of the match and the validity of the papal bull that dispensed it, seemed promising to the king's cause, and Wolsey and Henry found solid grounds for further appeals to Rome.[13]

But conflict between Francis and Charles continued to ravage Europe, making it rather untimely for Pope Clement VII (caught in the crossfire) to pass judgment on so realm-shaking a matter.[14] In April of 1528, he would eventually order Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio to London, ostensibly armed with a commission to try the case within England—but the Pope had no intention of allowing a judgment there, preferring instead that proceedings be advocated to his own jurisdiction in Rome.[15] After months of further legal maneuverings, the trial was finally convened at

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[11] Though exceedingly technical, Henry Ansgar Kelly's *The Matrimonial Trials of King Henry VIII* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976) remains the indispensible source on the divorce.

[12] *L&P* IV(ii), 4112; Cavendish, *The Life and Death,* p. 77.

[13] The famous point of contention concerned the young Katherine's prior marriage to Prince Arthur Tudor, King Henry's older brother.

[14] To make matters worse, Queen Katherine was aunt to Charles V, whose imperial troops had seized Rome in the spring of 1527, taking the Pope into custody.

[15] On Campeggio, see Edward Victor Cardinal, *Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio, Legate to the Courts of Henry VIII and Charles V* (Boston: Chapman & Grimes, 1935) and William E. Wilkie, *The*

Blackfriars in May 1529; Campeggio successfully stalled the proceedings, leaving no choice but to nullify the current action and reconvene in Rome.[16] Wolsey's fate, it is often said, was sealed at this moment.

I will save the climax of the story for later in the chapter, as it belongs to an entirely different, and entirely final, phase of Wolsey's career. The cardinal's time at the top of fortune's wheel was much longer than that at the bottom, and it was during his long ascendency that he provoked the ire of so many of Henry's subjects, both noble and common—including those with sharp tongues and sharp pens. In the decade preceding his downfall and death, the cardinal was a subject of considerable literary interest, figuring in a robust corpus of surviving satires and slanders. Collectively, these texts have been largely ignored by modern scholars, despite their tempting position at an intersection of literary and cultural concerns. The best known of the anti-Wolsey poems flow from the pen of John Skelton, tutor to Henry VIII and self-styled poet laureate of the English realm. Between 1521 and 1523, Skelton composed a trilogy of attacks against the cardinal, setting much of the satirical agenda that would subsequently define anti-Wolsey slander.[17] The first salvo was the infamously opaque *Speke, Parrot,* a virtuoso performance that embeds a critique of Wolsey within a tapestry of linguistic fragments; often regarded as a masterpiece of Skelton's canon, the poem lampoons the cardinal on a variety of grounds, including his usurpation

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Cardinal Protectors of England: Rome and the Tudors before the Reformation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

[16] Henry's chances of receiving a favorable verdict in the 1529 legatine trial were largely sunk by the pacification of the Continental scene. One month before the trial's July adjournment, The Treaty of Barcelona confirmed peace between the Papacy and the Empire; one month after, the Treaty of Cambrai brought France and Spain to friendly terms. Such tidings did little for Henry's cause.

[17] For the poems of Skelton, discussed below, see *John Skelton: The Complete English Poems*, ed. John Scattergood (New York: Penguin Books, 1983). For an overall approach to the poems, see William Nelson, "Skelton's Quarrel with Wolsey," *PMLA* 51 (1936): 377-98 and Delmas Crisp, "Cardinal Wolsey in Skelton's Poetry," *Innisfree* 2 (1975): 47-61. Anti-Wolsey sentiment has also been detected indirectly in Skelton's play *Magnyfycence*; in this chapter, I focus on the overt attacks within the poems.

of royal authority and his lavish expenditures.[18] Wolsey equally figures in Skelton's *Collyn Clout,* a throwback to the medieval tradition of ecclesiastical satire; here, the cardinal stands as the supreme example of clerical negligence, an unchecked tyrant whose oppressive policies have left the commons both spiritually and financially bankrupt.[19] Finally, *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?* is perhaps the most direct of Skelton's attacks; framed as a warning to the English nobility, the poem records the degradation of court culture under the base-born cardinal's malevolent influence. Taken together, these three poems entail a major assault on Wolsey's personal and political character—and as we will see, they do so in a surprisingly consistent affective mode.[20]

In addition to Skelton's well-known corpus, attacks on Wolsey appear elsewhere in the records of Henrician poetry. George Cavendish, Wolsey's biographer, also penned a lesser known poetic treatment of the cardinal; as part of his *de casibus* cycle of Henrician worthies, he conjures Wolsey's doleful ghost, who laments the ruthless ambition that brought about his ruin.[21] Equally interesting is what may be called the populist tradition of anti-Wolsey poems. At least two anonymous ballads denounce the cardinal's ruinous authority; "Of the Cardnall Wolse" (c. 1521) is cast as a direct complaint to King Henry himself, while "An Impeachment of Wolsey" (c. 1528)

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[18] For discussion of this bizarre poem, see John M. Berdan, "Speke, Parrot: An Interpretation of Skelton's Satire," *Modern Language Notes* 30 (1915): 140-44; John Chalker, "The Literary Seriousness of John Skelton's 'Speke, Parrot,'" *Neophilologus* 44 (1960): 39-47; F. W. Brownlow, "Speke, Parrot: Skelton's Allegorical Denunciation of Cardinal Wolsey," *Studies in Philology* 65 (1968): 124-39; and Nancy Coiner, "Galathea and the Interplay of Voices in Skelton's *Speke, Parrot*," in *Subjects on the World's Stage: Essays on British Literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. David C. Allen and Robert A. White (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995), pp. 88-99. The critical discussion centers on the attempt to find Skelton's method within the poem's madness.

[19] For this theological context, see Paul E. McLane, "Prince Lucifer and the Fitful 'Lanternes of Lyght': Wolsey and the Bishops in Skelton's *Colyn Clout*e," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 43 (1980): 159-79.

[20] Greg Walker, in his important full-length study of Skelton, persuasively argues that the poetic performances must not be attributed to the poet's genuine conviction; see *John Skelton and the Politics of the 1520s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[21] "Le Historye Cardinalis Eboracensis," in George Cavendish, *Metrical Visions*, ed. A.S.G. Edwards (University of South Carolina Press: The Newberry Library, 1980).

develops the cardinal's unfavorable comparison with Thomas Becket into a full-blown prophecy of Wolsey's fall.[22]

But the most extensive anti-Wolsey invective is *Rede Me and Be Nott Wrothe,* a 3000 line salvo composed by the Lutheran exiles William Roy and Jerome Barlowe. Writing from Strassburg in 1527, the authors leave little unscathed in their treatment of England's spiritual shortcomings; as the realm's premier churchman, Wolsey is blasted throughout as the quintessential example of ecclesiastical corruption.[23] This satire is most notable for its elaborate paratexual structure: the complete edition consists of 1) a mock-display of Wolsey's coat of arms, explicated in the accompanying stanzas; 2) a series of fictionalized letters between two would-be readers of the text, designed to obscure the poem's true origin; 3) a prefatory dialogue between the author and the book, in which the personified text fears reprisal for its contents; 4) an ironic lamentation, in which a Catholic clergyman mourns the recent death of the Mass; and 5) finally, the main satire itself, a two-part dialogue on all matters religious by a pair of simple serving men. This long, demanding text (smuggled secretly into England, to the ire of Wolsey and his agents) suggests the extent of the cardinal's ability to provoke literary response.

The poems described above comprise a dispersed, yet surprisingly consistent rejoinder to Wolsey's stranglehold on Henrician politics. United in their apparent disdain for the low-bred, ambitious cardinal, they inevitably return to Wolsey's unseemly place in the contemporary political scene: he is painted as a base usurper, slowly poisoning the commonweal with his unchecked, unmatched power. As suggested in the introduction, these poetic satires and slanders are ultimately underwritten by a core response of disgust: an affect perhaps always implicated in satire,

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[22] Both poems are reprinted in the second volume of *Ballads from Manuscripts*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, 2 vols. (London, 1868-72).

[23] William Roy and Jerome Barlowe, *Rede Me and Be Nott Wrothe, For I Saye No Thinge But Trothe*, ed. Edward Arber (London, 1871).

but one especially apt for denouncing Wolsey's precise role as a foreign body infecting Henry's England. Before engaging the poems in more detail, we must first consider the precise workings of disgust, as they have been articulated in a number of related fields.

A Brief History of Disgust

Nowhere do the Henrician poets employ the term *disgust*, a word that began its career in the English language at approximately the same time that Shakespeare was starting his as a playwright.[24] Yet there's little doubt that the sentiment of disgust, as we would now describe it, was richly featured in early modern life, and the basic condition that evokes it—"matter out of place," in Mary Douglas's memorable phrase—was of obvious interest to a culture so invested in the management (and mismanagement) of social, political, and spiritual hierarchies.[25]

Since Darwin's pioneering work on emotional expression, disgust has been considered a core emotion of human experience; disgust elicitors in a cross-cultural context reliably predict a stereotypical set of responses, including facial behavior,[26] physiological changes,[27] and

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[24] The word's etymology is discussed below.

[25] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2002), p. 36. The importance of disgust in the early modern period may reflect Norbert Elias's controversial "civilizing hypothesis"—an argument for the increasing importance of institutionalized shame in the historical transition from the Middle Ages to modernity. Given the chronological sweep of Elias's argument, his more specific handling of data raises skepticism in some readers; for some, his reputation seems to resemble that which sometimes attaches to Foucault, of a thinker whose rich concepts are founded on shaky data. For a snapshot of this debate, see Stephen Mennell and Johan Goudsblom, "Civilizing Processes-Myth or Reality? A Comment on Duerr's Critique of Elias," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39 (1997): 729-33. For the current purposes, it is unnecessary to engage Elias's diachronic argument—but it is notable that he finds "court society" as the engine of the civilizing process, the site where "the moderation of passions, sublimation, is unmistakable and inevitable." See Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, ed. Eric Dunning *et al.* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1994), p. 246.

[26] First articulated by Darwin (see below), the universal disgust face involves, primarily, the gaping of the mouth and the wrinkling of the nose—a physiological response apt for the expulsion of food and avoidance of noxious smells. See Paul Ekman and Wallace V. Friesen, "Constants Across Cultures in the Face and Emotion," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 17 (1971): 124-29

neuroanatomical activation.[28] Yet disgust has long been an undertheorized emotion, and has become subject to serious investigation only in the last two decades. Since then, researchers have been making up for lost time—and as will become quickly apparent by glancing at the citations to this chapter, new contributions to the literature on disgust are being published every year. [29] (In fact, disgust has also occasioned several recent full-length treatments, drawing variously on theories from the sciences and humanities.)[30] In a cutting edge corner of emotion research, the architecture of disgust is an exciting framework to import into literary studies—though we must acknowledge that our current understanding is tentative, and will doubtlessly be revised as research continues.

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and "A New Pan-Cultural Facial Expression of Emotion," *Motivation and Emotion* 10 (1986): 159-68. (However, different domains of disgust—such as food-response disgust or animal-reminder disgust—do seem to modulate our precise facial response; see Paul Rozin, Laura Lowery, and Rhonda Ebert, "Varieties of Disgust Faces and the Structure of Disgust," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 66 [1994]: 870–81.) Though perhaps unsurprising, it is worth noting that both children and adults have more difficulty recognizing the disgust face than prototypical faces of anger and fear; see S.C. Widen and J.A. Russell, "Children's and Adults' Understanding of the 'Disgust Face,'" *Cognition & Emotion* 22 (2008): 1513–41.

[27] The somatic response to disgust includes "lowered blood pressure and galvanic skin response, nausea and actions including stopping, dropping the object of disgust and shuddering." See Val Curtis, Robert Aunger, and Tamer Rabie, "Evidence that Disgust Evolved to Protect from Risk of Disease," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London (Biological Sciences)* 271 (2004): S131.

[28] On neuroanatomical activation, see below. That the human response to disgust seems to be cross-culturally consistent is not, of course, to suggest that the *elicitors* of disgust are universal; see also below.

[29] For a fine overview of recent research on disgust, see Bunmi O. Olatunji and Craig N. Sawchuk, "Disgust: Characteristic Features, Social Manifestations, and Clinical Implications," *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 24 (2005): 932–62.

[30] William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Martha C. Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004) and *From Disgust to Humanity: Sexual Orientation and Constitutional Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Robert Rawdon Wilson, *The Hydra's Tale: Imagining Disgust* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2002); Winfried Menninghaus, *Disgust: The Theory and History of a Strong Sensation*, trans. Howard Eiland and Joel Golb (New York: SUNY Press, 2003); and William A. Cohen and Ryan Johnson, eds., *Filth: Dirt, Disgust, and Modern Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

To begin most simply: at its core, disgust is an emotion about food—or, to be more precise, spoiled food. It is an emotion about vomit, about nausea, about noxious, putrid smells; it is about how we know what we can eat, and how we know what we cannot. In evolutionary terms, natural selection obviously favored those organisms with a higher sensitivity to spoiled or rotten food, and it's likely that this safeguard was internalized into the disgust response during the long process of human development. In fact, disgust's basic, biological response is so integrated into human adaptive behavior that some theorists question whether it is an emotion at all—it might be closer, they suggest, to a motivational state like thirst or hunger.[31]

Food (and its rejection) has long been recognized as central to the operation of the disgust response, since Darwin's initial investigation in *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals.*[32] In the early twentieth century, A. Angyal confirmed that fear of "oral incorporation" was disgust's fundamental motivation, and in subsequent decades researchers have largely agreed that the primary domain of disgust was the mouth, the site of both ingestion and vomit.[33] In a foundational article of modern research, Paul Rosin and April E. Fallon offer a concise definition of "disgust as a food-related emotion": the feeling of disgust, they suggest, entails

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[31] See, for example, the following exchange: Judith A. Toronchuk and George F.R. Ellis, "Disgust: Sensory Affect or Primary Emotional System?" *Cognition & Emotion* 21 (2007): 1799–1818; Jaak Panksepp, "Criteria for Basic Emotions: Is DISGUST a Primary 'Emotion'?", *Cognition & Emotion* 21 (2007): 1819-28; and ibid., "Criteria for Basic Emotions: Seeking DISGUST?", *Cognition & Emotion* 21 (2007): 1829-32.

[32] Charles Darwin, *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* (New York, 1873), pp. 254-61.

[33] A. Angyal, "Disgust and Related Aversions," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 36 (1941): 393-412. With his emphasis on social taboos, Freud was a notable dissenter; he associated disgust primarily with sexual aversion. See *Three Essays on the History of Sexuality*, in Vol. 7 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogart Press, 1953-74).

> revulsion at the prospect of (oral) incorporation of an offensive object. The offensive objects are contaminants; that is, if they even briefly contact an acceptable food, they tend to render that food unacceptable.[34]

As subsequent research has confirmed, food-aversion behavior seems the fundamental component of disgust's physiological response, which includes, most centrally, the induction of nausea.[35] The emotion is, in other words, the "guardian of the mouth"— that which crucially prevents us from incorporating infectious or dangerous substances.[36]

Yet disgust is also an emotion about much more than food: it is an emotion about blood, about pus, about shit, about wounds, about death, about corpses. Despite the theoretical foundation outlined above, it is clear that issues of oral incorporation alone cannot account fully for the phenomenology of disgust: we obviously experience disgust in many circumstances that have little immediate to do with food or orality. Accordingly, investigators have identified a variety of different domains in which disgust triggers can be identified, radiating outward from the emotion's origins as an oral defense. Unsurprisingly, many of these domains continue to constellate around the issue of contamination, but the conceptualization of this contamination becomes increasingly abstract and metaphorized as we travel further out on the spectrum from disgust's original purview. In an influential essay, Jonathan Haidt, Clark McCauley, and Paul Rozin introduced the

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[34] Paul Rozin and April E. Fallon, "A Perspective on Disgust," *Psychological Review* 94 (1987): 23.

[35] See Yolanda Martins and Patricia Pliner, "'Ugh! That's disgusting!': Identification of the Characteristics of Foods Underlying Rejections Based on Disgust," *Appetite* 46 (2006): 75-85 and Birgit Mayer *et al.*, "A Disgust Mood State Causes a Negative Interpretation Bias, but Not in the Specific Domain of Body-Related Concerns," *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 47 (2009): 876-81.

[36] Jonathan Haidt *et al.*, "Body, Psyche, and Culture: The Relationship Between Disgust and Morality," *Psychology and Developing Society* 9 (1997): 111. Unsurprisingly, a great deal of literature considers disgust in terms of a disease-avoidance model; see Val Curtis and Adam Biran, "Dirt, Disgust, and Disease: Is Hygiene in our Genes?", *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 44 (2001): 17–31 and Richard J. Stevens and Betty M. Repacholi, "Does the Source of an Interpersonal Odour Affect Disgust? A Disease Risk Model and its Alternatives," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 35 (2005): 375-401.

"disgust scale," an articulation of the emotion's various forms across a series of discrete domains.[37] Their research suggests that disgust elicitors can be broadly categorized into two tiers. The first set, elicitors of *core disgust,* attends to the emotion's origins in orality: when we are disgusted by *food*, *bodily products,* or *animals* (particularly organisms associated with food or excrement, such as maggots, cockroaches, or rats), we are experiencing a visceral, somatic warning against oral incorporation. In evolutionary terms, these foundational elicitors originate as an oral prophylactic for a "species living with the constant threat of microbial contamination."[38]

Alternately, the second set of disgust elicitors has little to do with orality. In a process of cultural evolution, core disgust seems to have enlarged its purview, as a regulator of *sex*, *hygiene*, the *body envelope* (i.e., the physical integrity of the human body), and *death*. These domains, the researchers suggest, have in common their ability to remind human beings of their fundamentally animal origins—and as such, this category of *animal-reminder disgust* serves an important cultural function, as a "defensive emotion that guards us against the recognition of our animality." They continue:

> Humans cannot escape the evidence of their animal nature. In every society people must eat, excrete, and have sex. They bleed when cut, and ultimately they die and decompose. We propose that most cultures have found ways to "humanize" these activities, through rituals, customs, and taboos that serve to differentiate humans from animals. People who violate their local food and sex taboos risk being shunned and reviled by their peers, and in many cultures they are labeled as "animals."

[37] Haidt, Clark McCauley, and Paul Rozin; "Individual Differences in Sensitivity to Disgust: A Scale Sampling Seven Domains of Disgust Elicitors," *Personality and Individual Differences* 16 (1994): 701-13.

[38] Ibid., p. 712, for the following quotations.

Because of the human need to distinguish ourselves from mere animals—to insist that our lives have a higher meaning, and perhaps even extend beyond death—we have evolved an emotion that discourages us from engaging that in the world which suggests the opposite.[39]

To be sure, the disgust domains outlined here are not exhaustive; in their recent revision of the disgust scale, Bunmi O. Olatuni and his colleagues have suggested adding *contamination* as a third category of disgust elicitors, while other researchers have advanced an entirely different taxonomy, around the categories of *pathogen avoidance; mate choice*; and *social interaction.* [40] But the consensus is that disgust is an emotion of avoidance, by which we attempt to limit our exposure to those objects that may endanger us, either with the physical threat of illness or with the

[39] The saliency of the "animal reminder" category of disgust can be demonstrated by a piece of experiential evidence: of all the fluids produced by the human body, tears are almost universally acknowledged to be the least revolting. This seems to correlate with the fact that, with minor exception, tears (in their affective function) are a uniquely human phenomenon. See S.B. Ortner, "Sherpa Purity," *American Anthropologist* 75 (1973): 49-63.

[40] Bunmi O. Olatunji, *et al.,* "The Structure of Disgust: Domain Specificity in Relation to Contamination Ideation and Excessive Washing," *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 43 (2005): 1069-86; Olatunji, *et al.,* "The Disgust Scale: Item Analysis, Factor Structure, and Suggestions for Refinement," *Psychological Assessment* 19 (2007): 281-97; Olatunji, *et al.*, "Core, Animal Reminder, and Contamination Disgust: Three Kinds of Disgust with Distinct Personality, Behavioral, Physiological, and Clinical Correlates," *Journal of Research in Personality* 42 (2008): 1243-59; Joshua M. Tybur, Debra Lieberman, and Vladas Griskevicius, "Microbes, Mating, and Morality: Individual Differences in Three Functional Domains of Disgust," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97 (2009): 103-22. Many discrete studies have investigated disgust in terms of (literal and symbolic) contamination fears; see Nichole Fairbrother, Sarah J. Newth, and S. Rachman, "Mental Pollution: Feelings of Dirtiness Without Physical Contact," *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 43 (2005): 121-30; Daniel M.T. Fessler and Kevin J. Haley, "Guarding the Perimeter: The Outside-Inside Dichotomy in Disgust and Bodily Experience," *Cognition & Emotion* 20 (2006): 3-19; Carol Nemeroff and Paul Rozin, "The Contagion Concept in Adult Thinking in the United States: Transmission of Germs and of Interpersonal Influence," *Ethos* 22 (1994) 156-86; S. Rachman, "Fear of Contamination," *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 42 (2004): 1227-55; Paul Rozin *et al.*, "The Borders of the Self: Contamination Sensitivity and Potency of the Body Apertures and Other Body Parts," *Journal of Research in Personality* 29 (1995): 318–40; S. Rachman, "Pollution of the Mind," *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 32 (1994): 311–14.

existential threat of confronting our own material nature.[41] Taken wholly, this entails the basic notion of "pure disgust," the feeling of disgust "devoid of moral connotations."[42]

But more challenging, and more pertinent to our analysis of literature and culture, are the myriad of instances in which the emotion of disgust seems occasioned by violations of the *moral* order—or they do, at least, according to ordinary language. Some researchers have claimed that the lay sense of "moral" disgust is, strictly speaking, a linguistic slippage: that is, when we claim to be *disgusted* by an act of racism, for example, we are really just mislabeling the experience of anger.[43] Yet there is a compelling body of evidence to suggest a deep connection between the visceral, embodied experience of pure disgust and the so-called "disgust" that is elicited by sociomoral transgressions. While the elicitors of this sociomoral disgust are shaped by culturally-specific variation,[44] the semantic congruence of disgust's visceral and sociomoral forms occurs across a wide linguistic range: we can point to examples from the Indo-European, Afroasiatic, and Sino-Tibetian language families in which a single word signifies both eruptions of the stomach and

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[41] Unsurprisingly, this general avoidance function of disgust seems to have been finely tuned in those with phobias and anxiety disorders. See, for example, Graham C.L. Davey, Sarah Bickerstaffe, and Benie A. MacDonald, "Experienced Disgust Causes a Negative Interpretation Bias: A Causal Role for Disgust in Anxious Psychopathology," *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 44 (2006): 1375-84.

[42] Jorge Moll *et al.*, "The Moral Affiliations of Disgust: A Functional MRI Study," *Cognitive and Behavioral Neurology* 18 (2005): 68.

[43] See Edward B. Royzman and John Sabini, "Something It Takes to Be an Emotion: The Interesting Case of Disgust," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 31(2001): 29-59 and Robin L. Nabi, "Theoretical Verses Lay Meaning of Disgust: Implications for Emotion Research," *Cognition and Emotion* 16 (2002): 695-703. This hypothesis, in my estimation, has been overturned by the more recent research of Sherman *et al.*, "The Psychophysiology of Moral Disgust." Royzman and Sabini, it is crucial to note, have altered their stance on disgust in the more recent "Moral Dyspepsia."

[44] See Jonathan Haidt, Silvia Helena Roller, and Maria G. Dias, "Affect, Culture, and Morality, or Is It Wrong to Eat Your Dog?" *Journal of Personality* 65 (1993): 613-28.

eruptions of the social order.[45] As the guardian of social contamination, sociomoral disgust is a culturally-inflected elaboration of core disgust's biological purview.

That sociomoral infractions elicit a genuine disgust response—sometimes called the "moral dyspepsia" thesis—has received ample substantiation in the laboratory setting. The recent work of Gary D. Sherman and his colleagues reveals that viewing morally offensive images predicts the same somatovisceral responses typically associated with food-based, core disgust. That morally objectionable content should elicit the tightening of the throat and a queasiness in the chest and stomach—involuntary behaviors poised to block the ingestion of offensive food, and, if necessary, reject it—suggests the deep continuity between the biological origins of disgust and its culturally-conditioned adaptations.[46] The hypothesis is further substantiated by Edward B. Royzman *et al.*, who find that laboratory subjects asked to imagine an act of consensual sibling incest still experience a state of "oral inhibition," consisting of nausea, gagging, and diminishing of the appetite.[47] That the orality of the disgust response adheres in such moral examples suggests that these emotional elaborations are mapped across a spectrum. To this point, neurological research indicates that both pure and moralized disgust responses are underpinned by a similar anatomical architecture: functional MRI reveals that both domains "recruited remarkably overlapping neural substrates" in the medial and lateral orbitofrontal cortex.[48]

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[45] Bodily and sociomoral domains overlap semantically, for example, in *degout* (French), *eket* (German), *otvrashchenie* (Russian), *asco* (Spanish), *go-at* (Hebrew), *ken'o* (Japanese), *aw-shin* (Chinese), and *ghenna* (Bengali). See Haidt *et al.*, "Body, Psyche, and Culture," p. 117.

[46] See Gary D. Sherman, Jonathan Haidt, and James A. Coan, "The Psychophysiology of Moral Disgust: Throat Tightness and Heart Rate Deceleration," unpublished manuscript. I am thankful to Dr. Sherman for sharing his study with me.

[47] Edward B. Royzman, Robert F. Leeman, and John Sabini, "'You Make Me Sick': Moral Dyspepsia as a Reaction to Third-Party Sibling Incest," *Motivation and Emotion* 32 (2008): 100–08.

[48] Moll *et al.*, "The Moral Affiliations of Disgust," p. 75. See also Bruno Wicker *et al.*, "Both of Us Disgusted in My Insula: The Common Neural Basis of Seeing and Feeling Disgust," *Neuron* 40 (2003): 655–64; and P. Wright *et al.*, "*Disgust and the Insula*: fMRI Responses to Pictures of Mutilation and Contamination," *Neuroreport* 15 (1994): 2347–51.

The evidence seems conclusive: humans have evolved a "primary" disgust system as a biological safeguard, which became elaborated in a set of culturally and historically determined "complex" forms.[49] In its complex form, moral disgust guards not the human body, but the human soul: it is that which involves "the protection of the self as a spiritual entity from degrading and polluting influences," as articulated within a particular cultural context.[50] Charged with "the protection of the soul or the world from degradation and spiritual defilement,"[51] moral disgust thus keeps vigil over "regulative concepts such as sacred order, natural order, tradition, sanctity, sin, and pollution," just as disgust in its core form stands watch over the literal violation of our material self.[52] The transition from disgust's role as guardian of the body to guardian of sociomoral conventions seems to be an example of what evolutionary theorists call *exaptation*, the process by which an organism's fitness is enhanced by features serving a purpose other than that for which they were evolutionarily built.[53] In its primary form, the emotion of disgust helps us determine what sorts of (material) things we should allow within our physical body; in its extended, culturally

[49] Sarah Marzillier and Graham Davey, "The Emotional Profiling of Disgust-Eliciting Stimuli: Evidence for Primary and Complex Disgusts," *Cognition & Emotion* 18 (2004): 313-36.

[50] Moll *et al.*, "The Moral Affiliations of Disgust," p. 69.

[51] See Paul Rozin, *et al.*, "The CAD Triad Hypothesis: A Mapping Between Three Moral Emotions (Contempt, Anger, Disgust) and Three Moral Codes (Community, Autonomy, Divinity)," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 76 (1999): 576.

[52] The quotation derives from Shweder *et al.*, "The 'Big Three' of Morality (Autonomy, Community. Divinity) and the "Big Three' Explanations of Suffering," in *Morality and Health*, ed. Allan M. Brandt and Paul Rozin (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 138. This is the article on which Rozin *et al.* based their study.

[53] See Stephen Jay Gould and Elizabeth S. Vrba, "Exaptation — A Missing Term in the Science of Form," *Paleobiology* 8 (1982): 4–15 and Gould, "Exaptation: A Crucial Tool for Evolutionary Psychology," *Journal of Social Issues* 47 (1991): 43–65. On disgust as exaptation, see Royzman, Leeman, and Sabini, "'You Make Me Sick.'"

elaborated form, it helps us collectively determine what sort of (behavioral) things we should allow within our social body.[54]

But what of the word itself? The term *disgust*—a cognate of the Italian *disgusto* and French *desgoust*, derived ultimately from the Latin *gustus* (taste)—came into the English language at the close of the sixteenth century; the earliest printed appearance that I've located occurs in John Florio's Italian dictionary *A Worlde of Words* (1598). Florio's translation reveals the semantic congruence of disgust's visceral and sociomoral forms: the Italian *disgusto/sgusto* is rendered with the English cluster "disgust, distaste, vnkindnes, dislike."[55] This dual usage is confirmed in Randle Cotgrave's *A Dictionary of the French and English Tongues* (1611), which renders *Desappetit* as "a queasinesse, or disgust" and *Desaimer* as "to fall into dislike, or disgust of."[56] When the Catholic loyalist Anthony Copley denounces both Jesuit and Protestant prophecy, his expression equally suggests the proximity between moral disgust and distaste:

> So likewise of her Maiesties end how disasterously they haue prophecied, and do expect, I am sure you haue heard and do disgust as much as I. But what talke I of Protestants, seeing that also vpõ very religious Catholikes they haue augured no lesse fatally, for being their known or but suspected distasters?[57]

That, in 1602, both *disgust* and *distaste* are deployed in this context suggests the immediate connection between the concept's gastric origins and its moral elaboration. In fact, in the years

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[54] Or, as Jonathan Haidt and his colleagues put it: disgust, having "evolved to help our omnivorous species figure out what to *eat* in the physical world, now helps our social species figure out what to *do* in the cultural world." See Haidt *et al.*, "Body, Psyche, and Culture," p. 108.

[55] John Florio, *A Worlde of Wordes, or Most Copious, and Exact Dictionarie in Italian and English* (London, 1598), p. 370. Florio confirms the generalized form in the definition of *Disparére,* which he renders "a disopinion, a diuersitie in conceit....Also a disgust or vnkindnes" (p. 108). Incidentally, the word *distaste* seems to have entered the language near-concurrently with *disgust*; its first recorded appearance (in the verbal form) occurs in 1582 (OED, "distaste, v.").

[56] Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London, 1611), sig. Bb; Aavi^{v}. Similarly, John Bullokar defines *disgust* as an undifferentiated "distate"; see *An English Expositor Teaching the Interpretation of the Hardest Words Vsed in our Language* (London, 1616), sig. F2^{v}.

[57] Anthony Copley, *Another Letter of Mr. A.C. to his dis-Iesuited Kinseman* (London, 1602), p. 25.

immediately after Florio's rendering, *disgust* is used quite regularly in its sociomoral form: in the first years of the seventeenth century, the word appears often in religious polemics, as a term of moral derision.[58] Though some researchers assert that the sociomoral usage of *disgust* is merely a figurative extension of the emotion's true visceral form (the form suggested by its etymological origins in distaste), it's telling, I think, that both the gustatory and sociomoral usage enter the English language simultaneously.[59]

THE DISGUSTING WOLSEY

Armed with a theory of disgust, I will now turn to the revolting image of Wolsey that emerges in the writings of his Henrician contemporaries. Suitable for indicting both material and moral failings, revulsion is the affective touchstone of anti-Wolsey sentiment; as we will see, attacks on Wolsey are punctuated with references to appetite, indulgence, beastliness, disease, etc.—the variety of disgust domains I have just examined. In this sense, portrayals of Wolsey take pains to bar the cardinal from any association with the Bakhtinian classical body, that "strictly completed, finished product…isolated, alone, fenced off from other bodies."[60] But at the same time, this emphasis on the grotesque is hardly carnivalesque; there is little festive about the cardinal's open body, which elicits revulsion and terror, not celebration and empowerment.[61] For the Henrician

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[58] See, for example, Christopher Bagshaw, *A Sparing Discouerie of our English Iesuits, and of Fa. Parsons Proceedings Vnder Pretence of Promoting the Catholike faith in England* (London, 1601), p. 33; Robert Parsons, *A Manifestation of the Great Folly and Bad Spirit of Certayne in England Calling Themselues Secular Priestes* (London, 1602), p. 60[v]; and Parsons, *A Treatise Tending to Mitigation Towardes Catholike-Subiectes in England* (London, 1607), p. 78.

[59] That is, the available history of the language provides no evidence for a graduated metaphorization of the word.

[60] M. M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1968), p. 29.

[61] Note that this response is directed from both ends of the social hierarchy; a satirical vocabulary is largely shared by populist (in, for example, the folk ballad tradition) and aristocratic (in, for example, letters and official accounts) attacks on Wolsey. An approach to this data set thus

satirists, the disgust that Wolsey evokes is the index to his moral status—and it is this disgust that guides their smear campaign, which denounces both the cardinal and his polluting influence on England's social body.[62]

To begin with food, the core domain of disgust. Among his many traits, Thomas Wolsey seems to have been something of a fat man—at least according to (some) early modern portraiture, and at least according to John Skelton.[63] In the poetic context, Wolsey's weight was an easy metonym for his greater tendencies toward gluttony and avarice; the satires routinely invoke eating habits as indicative of Wolsey's general character, condemning the "So myche bely joye, and so wastefull banketyng" as viscerally taxing and morally sickening.[64]

There is little doubt that Wolsey liked to eat, and he seems to have made a show of it: during his many feasts and banquets, Cavendish records, Wolsey's tables were stocked with "two hundred dishes or above of wonderous costly meats and devices, subtly devised."[65] In 1527, he produced a particularly lavish spread for the visiting French ambassadors:

> Anon came up the second course with so many dishes, subtleties, and curious devices, which were above an hundred in number, of so goodly proportion and costly that I suppose the Frenchmen never saw the like. The wonder was no less worthy in deed. There were castles with images in the same; Paul's Church and steeple in proportion for the quantity as well counterfeited as the painter should have painted it upon a cloth or wall. There were beasts, birds, fowls of divers kinds,

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benefits from the more general caution of Susan Signe Morrison, who has recently argued that we must "temper Bakhtin's misleading implication that the folk enjoyed excreta while aristocrats and clerics disdained them; [because] negative and positive views of excreta cut across class divisions." See her *Excrement in the Middle Ages: Sacred Filth and Chaucer's Fecopoetics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 7.

[62] Of course, our contemporary phrases like "smear campaign" and "mudslinging" draw their force from the register of disgust.

[63] According to Gwyn, there are only two surviving near-contemporary portraits of Wolsey. The first, by an unknown artist around 1520, is the image that immortalized the notion of a fat Wolsey; Gwyn, however, claims (without further explanation) that "it was never intended to be an accurate representation." The other portrait, of French origin in 1567, "suggests a much thinner man" (*KC*, p. xvi).

[64] *Speke, Parrot,* line 492.

[65] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, p. 30.

> and personages, most lively made and counterfeit in dishes; some fighting (as it were) with swords, some dancing with ladies, some in complete harness jousting with spears, and with many more devices than I am able with my wit to describe.[66]

For good reason, Wolsey's dining habits became the stuff of diplomatic legend, though not always to his credit: the Venetian ambassador Sebastiano Giustiniani, for example, records that during public functions "no one is served with the viands of the sort presented to the Cardinal until after their removal from before him."[67] Yet even with this notable appetite, food didn't sit well with Wolsey's stomach; he long suffered from digestive issues, which he tried to relieve in 1520 by securing papal approval to continue eating meat during the Lenten season.[68] Skeptics like Skelton railed against his motives:

> For he hath suche a bull,
> He may take whom he wull,
> And as many as him lykys;
> May ete pigges in Lent for pikys,
> After the sectes of heretykis,
> For in Lent he wyll ete
> All maner of flesshe mete.[69]

In light of such criticism, Wolsey eventually thought it wise to extend permissions to the populace; according to Polydore Vergil, in 1522 he overturned the Lenten restrictions on dairy products, in order to "lessen the stigma attaching to his name."[70]

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[66] Ibid., p. 73.

[67] Sebastiano Giustiniani, *Four Years at the Court of Henry VIII,* trans. Rawdon Brown, 2 vols. (London, 1854), 2:315.

[68] *L&P* III(i), 634; 647.

[69] *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*, lines 1078-87. Skelton's image of the pig being cloaked as a fish was apparently proverbial: in *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, for example, Thomas More speaks of the "llollardes…that put a pygge in to the water, on good frydate/ and sayd go in pygge and come oute pyke / and so when they had chaunged the name, the toke yt for fyshe and ete yt." This passage is quoted and discussed in Charles Clay Doyle, "Lenten Fare and the Language of Falsehood: Pig and Pike, Fish and Fowl," *Albion* 10 (1978): 29.

[70] Polydore Vergil, *The Anglica Historia, A.D. 1485-1537*, ed. Denys Hay (London: Royal Historical Society, 1950), p. 293.

The tension between the pleasure and pain of the gourmand's life has a formal correlation in the literary rendition of Wolsey's diet. For Skelton, so apt at producing *copia*, the elaborate description of Wolsey's "banketynge braynlesse" becomes stomach-turning, and the excessiveness of the catalog stands as an obvious indictment of the cardinal's moral appetite.[71] *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?* offers a pointed example:

> To drynke and for to eate
> Swete ypocras and swete meate!
> To kepe his flesshe chast,
> In Lent for a repast
> He eateth capons stewed,
> Fesaunt and partriche mewed,
> Hennes, checkynges, and pygges;
> He foynes and he frygges,
> Spareth neither mayde ne wyfe:
> This is a postels lyfe![72]

The rapid-fire enumeration of Skelton's signature style renders this menu nauseating; there's little sweet about these meats, whose cumulative effect induces sensory exhaustion. And exhaustion is a concern, given the apparent scope of Wolsey's consumptive habits: the transitional rhyme *pygges/frygges* indicates a temporary shift in registers, and the corresponding turn from conquests digestive to conquest sexual suggests the flexibility of *appetite* as a category of moral critique , which readily expands (like the spectrum of disgust) from the gustatory to the genital.

But the condemnation of Wolsey's stomach is perhaps most salient in Skelton's depiction of what the upstart cardinal is *not* eating. Because of his unnatural elevation, Wolsey is dining well above his station:

> Howe ye were wonte to drynke
> Of a lether bottell
> With a knauysshe stoppell,
> Whan mamockes was your meate,
> With moldy brede to eate;

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[71] *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*, line 71.

[72] Ibid., lines 217-26.

Ye cowde none other gete
To chewe and to gnawe,
To fyll therwith your mawe;
Loggyng in fayre strawe,
Couchyng your drousy heddes
Somtyme in lousy beddes.[73]

In these lines, we find the most naked connection between food and disgust; a man of Wolsey's social standing and moral character (so the associative logic goes) should be eating rotten tables-scraps. As above, this gastric association soon extends to other disgust elicitors: if the world was just, the cardinal would be spending his nights not in the elaborate chambers of Hampton Palace, but in the muck and filth of its stables.

This image of the "lousy" Wolsey introduces another key disgust trope in the contemporary satires: the cardinal as a site of disease and infection. As noted above, Wolsey's health was routinely ailing; he may have suffered from adult-onset diabetes, bouts of gallstones and jaundice, and regular infections.[74] The poetic tradition, however, went for the jugular, emphasizing the illness that contained the most obvious moral dimension: Wolsey's alleged struggle with the effects of syphilis. Roy and Barlowe broach the issue with little subtlety:

Ief: O naye / for he hath no wyfe /
But whoares that be his lovers.
Watk: Yf he vse whoares to occupy /
It is grett marvell certanyly /
That he escapeth the frenche pockes.
Ieff: He had the pockes with out fayle/
Wherfore people on hym did rayle/
With many obprobrious mockes.[75]

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[73] *Collyn Clout,* lines 649-59. Skelton's use of *mammock* ("A scrap or shred, a broken or torn piece"), in the *OED*'s first recorded example, is suggestive: though the term entails a general association with shredding and tearing, many of the more notable usages in the *OED* have an oral component, as in the examples of Shakespeare ("Hee did so set his teeth, and teare it / Oh, I warrant how he mammockt it") and Milton ("The obscene, and surfeted Priest scruples not to paw, and mammock the sacramentall bread"). See both "mammock, *v*." and "mammock, *n*."

[74] See Jack's discussion in the *ODNB* entry.

[75] *Rede Me and Be Nott Wrothe*, p. 58.

Though it is impossible to ascertain the validity of this rumor, Wolsey apparently did have a perennial ailment of the eye, which Skelton took as sign of a venereal infection:

> So fell and so irous,
> So full of malencoly,
> With a flap afore his eye,
> Men wene that he is pocky.[76]

A Spanish dispatch of 1522 confirms that Wolsey had an issue with his sight, but it acquires here a very different moral valance:

> Henry leads his usual life, leaving all the cares of state to Wolsey, who is so very ill that he is in danger of losing an eye, and the rest of his body seems almost equally affected. There seems little hope of his immediate recovery, especially as he will not abandon the affairs of the kingdom to others and must see many people daily.[77]

Wolsey's "flap," Gwyn suggests, was likely "some kind of disfigurement," which "gave Skelton the opportunity to make an easy gibe."[78] This is perhaps right, but the gap between truth and tradition is instructive: Wolsey's physical form still provokes a disgust response, which is, in turn, still correlated with the moral loathsomeness his behavior displays.

And Skelton would gibe, ruthlessly: *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?* concludes by comparing this "Morbilloso Thoma" to a host of ancient lepers, monsters, and incurables. Most humorously, he imagines a scene in which Wolsey seeks aid from Balthasar de Guercis, the Queen's physician:

> He is nowe so ouerthwart,
> And so payned with pangis,
> That all his trust hangis
> In Balthasor [who]...
> Hath promised to hele our cardinals eye;
> Yet sum surgions put a dout,
> Lest he wyll put it clene out,
> And make him lame of his neder limmes:

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[76] *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*, lines 1167-70.

[77] *Calendar of State Papers, Spain: Further Supplement to Volumes 1 and 2*, ed. Garrett Mattingly (London: H.M. Stationer's Office, 1954), p. 164.

[78] "Surely if he had been promiscuous, international gossip would have gotten hold of it" (*KC*, p. xvii).

God sende him sorowe for his sinnes![79]

Wolsey's health, it seems, would benefit greatly without the use of one nether limb in particular. It is telling that Skelton concludes his poem, an invective of over a thousand lines, with a meditation on Wolsey's health: after enumerating the cardinal's social and moral maladies, the poet leaves the reader with an unmistakable sense that Wolsey is rotten to the core, body and soul. In fact, after the poem proper concludes, Skelton again lampoons Wolsey's health in a Latin epilogue, which continues to correlate his physical and moral decay:

> Burdened with the Neapolitan disease,
> Covered with plaster poultice,
> Pierced with the physician's iron
> Relieved by nothing—
> Healed by nothing….
> If only, then, that glutton,
> That bad Cretan Lord,
> More rightly called crabbed,
> A mad fanatic,
> Would stay out of the whorehouse! [80]

A convergence of disease, decay, and sexual depravity, the syphilis trope is a perfect storm in the rhetoric of disgust.

We have seen how the anti-Wolsey satirists coordinate their attacks along various points of the theoretical disgust spectrum, clothing their barbs in images of food and orality, physical illness

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[79] *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*, lines 1181-85; 1197-1200.

[80] The Latin text is as follows:

> Neapolitano morbo gravatum
> Malagmate cataplasmate stratum
> Pharmacopole ferro foratum
> Nihilo magis alleviatum,
> Nihilo melius medicatum…
> A modo ergo ganea
> Abhoreat ille ganeus
> Dominus male creticus
> Aptius dictus tetricus
> Phanaticus freneticus. (lines 6-10; 14-18; my translation)

and degeneration, and sexual indiscretions. They also routinely dehumanize Wolsey through animal associations, another of the central categories in the taxonomy of disgust. These images are not, to be clear, the conventional figures of the beast fable, which had long deployed animal allegory in a satiric mode; instead, Skelton and company employ animalization specifically to debase the hated cardinal, to strip him of his pomp and dignity, to reduce him to the barest matter. Much like the example of syphilis, animal metaphors have little trouble invoking a network of overlapping disgust elicitors: when, for example, Skelton observes that "So fatte a magott, bred of a flesshe flye / Was nevyr suche a ffylty gorgon, nor suche an epycure," a single couplet activates images of animality, appetite, orality, rottenness, and excrement.[81] Though merely a pest in this instance, Wolsey most often takes on a more sinister form; he is famously cast in the satiric tradition as the "Bochers Curre," a ferocious mastiff who treats the realm as his chew-toy.[82] Again, the concurrent association with orality is inevitable: the cardinal, "An Impeachment of Wolsey" laments, "gnawen hys pepyll as A dogge do*th* a Catte."[83] Skelton confirms that the cardinal is on the heels of England's nobility, who

> Rynne away and crepe;
> Lyke a mayny of shepe,
> Dare nat loke out at dur
> For drede of the mastyue cur,
> For drede of the bochers dogge…
> He pluckes them by the hode,
> And shakes them by the eare.[84]

Happily for the satirists, the cardinal's surname seemed to indicate his canine form, as when Roy and Barlowe denounce him as a "Ragynge courre / wrapped in a wolues skynne."[85] Because of the

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[81] *Speke, Parrot,* lines 509-10.
[82] "Of the Cardnall Wolse," line 21.
[83] "An Impeachment of Wolsey," line 197.
[84] *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*, lines 294-99; 304-5.
[85] *Rede Me and Be Nott Wrothe*, p. 116.

typographical and paleographical properties of the early modern "long" form of the minuscule *s*, there is even a visual similarity between *wolfe* and *wolse*.

In concert with their general strategy of debasement and desublimation, the satirists also harped more generally on Wolsey's humble beginnings, quite apart from any animal association. (Though, to be sure, his father's trade ensured that any discussion of Wolsey's origin implicitly touches upon both food and animal concerns.) The poems abound with broad harangues against Wolsey's undue elevation; "Of the Cardnall Wolse," for example, begs King Henry to free himself "from *th*at Churle borne by kynde / and from *th*at vyle bochers Blode."[86] But the cardinal's origin is also cast more basically as a source of inherent revulsion. Frank Whigham has shown how, in the early seventeenth century, anxieties about a changing cultural order were encoded within an elaborate literary discourse of the alimentary tract, and it's thus unsurprising that Renaissance social warfare also borrowed more inclusively from the rhetoric of disgust.[87] The satires insistently expose from "whatt vilnes [Wolsey's] pompe did aryse," an indictment with both moral and material force.[88] Again, Skelton is tellingly caustic:

> He ruleth all at wyll,
> Without reason or skyll:
> How be it the primordyall
> Of his wretched originall,
> And his base progeny,
> And his gresy genealogy,
> He came of the sank royall,
> That was cast out of a bochers stall![89]

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[86] "Of the Cardnall Wolse," lines 26-27.

[87] Frank Whigham, "Reading Social Conflict in the Alimentary Tract: More on the Body in Renaissance Drama," *ELH* 55 (1988): 333-50. This is hardly a phenomenon restricted to the early modern period; researchers have devoted significant attention to how disgust informs the operation of class prejudice. See Gordon Hodson and Kimberly Costello, "Interpersonal Disgust, Ideological Orientations, and Dehumanization as Predictors of Intergroup Attitudes," *Psychological Science* 18 (2007): 691-98.

[88] *Rede Me and Be Nott Wrothe*, p. 32.

[89] *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*, lines 487-94.

It seems to me that the phrase "greasy genealogy" is a mark of Skelton's unique genius—one would be hard pressed to express the sentiment in a more revolting manner. In *Collyn Clout*, Skelton is even more precise in locating Wolsey's origin:

> With pryde inordinate,
> Sodaynly vpstarte
> From the donge carte,
> The mattocke and the shule,
> To reygne and to rule.[90]

Cast away with the butcher's viscera, and cast up from the dung-cart; as Skelton tells it, Wolsey is a phoenix rising from a pile of shit and filth. What's more, his physical defilement accrues a moral analog, when we recall that in early modern England carts were used to convey all manner of social and legal offenders to sites of public punishment and execution: by revealing the *carte* as the site of Wolsey's generation—from which he sprung, it seems, like Athena from the head of Zeus—Skelton suggests that the corrupt cardinal is destined for that "vile deathe that is ordained for wretchede theves."[91] That Wolsey has traded the cart and the shovel (the tools of his station) for the scepter and a cardinal's hat suggests the extent to which the natural order has been perverted by his undue elevation.

There are a myriad of ways in which contemporary satires attempt to construct Wolsey's physical body as a site of revulsion: he is associated materially with images of overindulgence, illness, sexual decadence, rottenness, excrement, filth, and animality. Yet as we have seen, disgust is an emotion elicited by stimuli both physical *and* symbolic, a reflection of its dual role as guardian of the body and guardian of the soul. And while descriptions of the cardinal's corporeal repulsiveness

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[90] *Collyn Clout,* lines 643-47.

[91] These are the words of Thomas Wyatt, who found himself facing treason charges for (among other things) having ambiguously linked King Henry to the figure of the cart. For discussion of this, and the cart figure generally, see *AEP*, pp. 1-3. Whigham and Rebhorn suggest that the word was imbued with "multivalent and near-sulfuric energy" (p. 2). The Wyatt line is quoted on p. 3.

carry an obvious symbolic freight, another strand of anti-Wolsean discourse tends to exhibit the ways that Wolsey enacts the more figurative dynamics of disgust.

For example, the satires also condemn Wolsey as a general intruder in the courtly sphere: his very authority, quite apart from his physical loathsomeness, entails an encroachment and violation of the king's prerogative. In this sense, Wolsey doubly relates to the notion of *defilement*: he both is defiled (by his low birth, polluted body, and physical repulsiveness) and threatens to defile those in his proximity, such as the king.[92] After spending four years in the court of the young King Henry, the Venetian ambassador Giustiniani concluded that "this Cardinal is the person who rules both the King and the entire kingdom"; this sentiment was apparently shared by many English observers, and a general anxiety about Wolsey's prominence pervades the contemporary poems.[93] For Skelton, Wolsey exemplifies the worst type of statesman, he

> That wolde conquinate,
> That wolde contaminate,
> And that wolde vyolate,
> And that wolde derogate,
> And that wolde abrogate[94]

the sanctity of the English realm. Wolsey's ascendency, ironically enough, has descended upon the country like a plague, to the despoilment of King Henry and his subjects. This usurpation is attacked prominently in the ballad tradition: "Of the Cardnall Wolse," for example, warns the king that "As long as on / Dothe Reyne & Rule, as ye do see, / So long in pov*er*te *th*is Realme shalbe."[95] Alternately, "An Impeachment of Wolsey" directs its address at the cardinal himself:

> of yngland the Rule, & Souere*n*te
> of yngland thow haste had…
> Vsurpyd awtoryte is thy defence;

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[92] On the varied textures of the word *defilement*, see Whigham, *Seizures of the Will* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 196ff.

[93] Giustiniani, *Four Years*, 2:314.

[94] *Collyn Clout*, lines 703-7.

[95] "Of the Cardnall Wolse," lines 12-14.

no man darre the Resyste.[96]

As Skelton records in his trilogy, the most damaging aspect of Wolsey's influence is its unending scope; whether in Star Chamber, Chancery, or the Common Law courts, the cardinal's unilateral authority demonstrates how dangerous it is "For one man to rule a kynge…to governe over all / and rule a realme royal."[97]

But as a social pathogen, Wolsey was most dangerous in his capacity to infect Henry himself. The cardinal's influence on the king was a regular concern of contemporary observers, many of whom could not believe that King Henry would willingly subject himself to such a monster. According to legal records, an Englishman named Anthony Irby proffered (quite unwisely) one such suggestion:

> It is a wonder to see the kyng, how he is ordered now a days, ffor the Cardynall & the duke of Suff*olk*, which the kyng haith brought vpp of noughte, do rewle hym in all thyng*es* [as] they lyst; whedr it be by negramency, wytchecrafte, or pollycy no man knoweth, but as it is thought the oon of them by his Neg*ra*mancy and the other by his wytchcrafte.[98]

More broadly, this charge was echoed by Tyndale in *The Practice of Prelates*, in the midst of an anti-Wolsey diatribe:

> And as I heard it spoken of divers, he made by craft of necromancy, graven imagery to bear upon him, wherewith he bewitched the king's mind, and made the king to dote upon him more than ever he did any lady or gentlewoman so that now the king's grace followed him, as he before followed the king.[99]

Finally, Skelton invokes the witchcraft trope in *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*:

the kynges grace

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[96] "An Impeachment of Wolsey," lines 2-3; 28-29.

[97] *Collyn Clout,* lines 989; 992-93.

[98] TNA, SP 1/14, fol. 179. See the introduction to the next chapter for discussion of Suffolk's role in this passage.

[99] William Tyndale, *Expositions and Notes on Sundry Portions of the Holy Scriptures: Together with the Practice of Prelates*, ed. Henry Walter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849), p. 308. Tyndale's expression suggests that the witchcraft involves a misdirection of the king's erotic attention; Wolsey is perhaps implicitly linked to anti-papal notions of clerical sodomy.

> Is toward hym so mynded,
> And so farre blynded,
> That he can nat parceyue
> How he doth hym disceyue.
> I dought, lest by sorsery,
> Or suche other loselry
> As wychecraft, or charmyng;
> For he is the kynges derlyng.[100]

Whether or not such claims were literally believed by contemporaries, this textual record suggests that Wolsey's social infection could have the imaginative quality of a demonic possession. In the nineteenth century, anthropologists like Frasier argued that cultural laws of contagion were a brand of "sympathetic magic"; in these early modern accounts, Wolsey is imagined as a magician that casts his contagion into being.[101]

The stakes of this necromantic inhabitation were not small. The latent anxiety in much of the anti-Wolsey literature is that the cardinal will eventually come to supplant King Henry entirely—a virus that has overrun its host, so to speak. A report of Giustiniani's experience in England suggests one possible form that this effacement might take:

> On the ambassador's first arrival in England, [Wolsey] used to say to him, -- "*His Majesty will do so and so*:" subsequently, by degrees, he went forgetting himself, and commenced saying, "*We shall do so and so*:" at this present he has reached such a pitch that he says, "*I shall do so and so."*[102]

Ten years later, in the midst of Wolsey's undoing, a "boke of articles whiche the Lordes had put to the kynge agaynste the Cardinall" would similarly complain that "in all writynges which he wrot to Rome or any other forayn Prince, he wrot *Ego et Rex meus*, I and my kyng, as who woulde say that

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[100] *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*, lines 658-66.

[101] On sympathetic magic, see Paul Rozin, Linda Millman, and Carol Nemeroff, "Operation of the Laws of Sympathetic Magic in Disgust and Other Domains," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50 (1986): 703-12; Rozin and Nemeroff, "The Laws of Sympathetic Magic: A Psychological Analysis of Similarity and Contagion," in *Cultural Psychology: Essays on Comparative Human Development*, ed. James W. Stigler, Richard A. Shweder, and Gilbert Herdt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 203-32; and S. Rachman, "Pollution of the Mind," *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 32 (1994): 311–14.

[102] Giustiniani, *Four Years,* 2:314.

the kyng were his seruant."[103] In this linguistic slippage, Wolsey's assumption of Henry's voice nonetheless entails a symbolic occupation of the royal person—and it exemplifies, I think, a more pressing anxiety about monarchal integrity. This dilemma is anchored at the heart of *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*, as elaborated in its most famous passage:

> Why come ye nat to courte?
> To whyche court?
> To the kynges courte?
> Or to Hampton Court?
> Nay, to the kynges court!
> The kynges courte
> Shulde haue the excellence;
> But Hampton Court
> Hath the preemynence![104]

There is little frivolous about Skelton here, who identifies a profoundly troubling ambiguity at the center of Henrician politics. To entertain the notion that Henry's authority may not be absolute—that it might be flexible, or porous, or even contingent—inherently entails a major destabilization to the social order of Skelton's England. In order to account for Wolsey's power, Skelton must essentially deconstruct the governing discourse of his political world: he must come to terms with the fact that, quite unhappily, *court* is no longer an unambiguous signifier. What happens to England, and to the English people, when one can no longer distinguish between the King's court and Wolsey's court? What does it mean that we must even ask "whych courte"? These questions belong to a much different conceptual order from those regarding Wolsey's weight, or those concerning his poxy eye. Yet they share an equal concern with the mechanics of disgust: the guardian of the moral order, and the emotion to which Skelton and his allies turn to guide their response to Wolsey's social intrusion.

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[103] Edward Hall, *Hall's Chronicle* (London, 1809), p. 767. The "boke," to my knowledge, does not survive (if it existed at all), but the complaints have been recorded in Hall; see also below.

[104] *Why Come Ye Nat to Courte?*, lines 401-9.

As we have seen, contemporary satirists employed a regular thematic vocabulary in the denunciation of Wolsey. We routinely encounter commentary on his infamous low birth, his insatiable appetite, his unseemly entry into English politics—all domains that correlate with the associative matrix of disgust. To conclude this section, I'll consider a particular instance that exemplifies these trends, but that also warrants specific consideration of its own: the mock-display of Wolsey's crest, perhaps the most immediately compelling feature of *Rede Me and Be Nott Wrothe*.[105] Proudly emblazoned on the title-page, the crest offers a seductive visual guide to the contents within the volume. On the verso, the image is complimented by a verse "descripcion of the armes," three stanzas of rhyme royal that both explicate the visual parody and introduce many of the central terms of the satire that follows.[106] The shield, supported by "two angels off Sathan," exemplifies in its ornaments Wolsey's status as a lightning rod of social conflict and dissention:

> The sixe blouddy axes in a bare felde
> Sheweth the cruelte of the red man /
> whiche hath devoured the beautifull swan.
> Mortall enmy vnto the whyte Lion/
> Carter of Yorcke /the vyle butchers soone.

In these opening lines, Roy and Barlowe deploy the groundwork for the associative network that accrues as their project progresses; Wolsey's affinity with red, for example, suggests his numerous identities as cardinal, antichrist, bloodthirsty tyrant, and butcher's son.[107]

Wolsey's social presumptions are implicitly underscored by the beast allegory, in which the cardinal is framed in opposition to his noble adversaries the dukes of Buckingham and Norfolk,

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[105] *Rede Me and Be Nott Wrothe*, p. 19.

[106] Ibid., p. 20, for what follows.

[107] Though Roy and Barlowe do not, as far as I can tell, deploy this sense explicitly, it's worth noting that the association between blood and Rome could assume a specifically gendered quality—as in Tribulation Wholesome's crack on the "menstruous cloth and rag of Rome" in *The Alchemist.* See Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist,* ed. Alvin B. Kernan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 3.1.33. Even more tellingly, in Barnabe Barnes's anti-Catholic play *The Devil's Charter* (1607) a cardinal is denounced for "the menstruous poison of his breath." See Barnes, *The Divils Charter* (London, 1607), sig. B^{v}.

invoked by their heraldic icons ("beautiful swan" and "whyte Lion"). The animal motif is balanced by a description of Wolsey's own mascot:

> The bandog in the middes doth expresse
> The mastif Curre bred in Ypswitch towne
> Gnawynge with his teth a kynges crowne.

It is no coincidence that Wolsey's canine form chews upon the symbol of royalty; he incorporates Henry's power into his own form, just as he has incorporated himself into the political center of the court. Furthermore, his predation is specifically construed as an act of leisure, suggesting the luxury that his usurped position affords; the *gnawynge* dog is one that savors the bone he chews, and there is a sense of oral sadism that attaches to Wolsey's mastery over the crown. The poem concludes by reflecting upon the more general consequence of this usurpation ("The cloubbe signifieth playne hys tiranny / Covered over with a Cardinals hatt"), before delivering a final warning to the upstart Wolsey: "Wherby prest take hede and beware thy croune." Though they had no way to know it in 1527, Roy and Barlowe would not have to wait long to see this prophecy fulfilled; in two years Wolsey would be cast from the court, and in three he would be dead.

THE FALL OF CARDINAL WOLSEY

I have examined in detail the discourse of disease, contamination, and corruption that was levied against Wolsey during his ascendency. The terms of this invective were forcefully recapitulated in the rhetoric surrounding his downfall. Wolsey was long cast as a source of social illness, a piece of spoiled meat in the belly of the body politic: in his final years, we see how he is ultimately purged from the Henrician social body, cast away in a remarkable act of political expulsion.

In the summer of 1529, things were not going particularly well for Cardinal Wolsey. Unable to muster enough leverage to force Pope Clement's hand, the cardinal and his agents watched hopelessly as King Henry's divorce proceedings were advocated to Rome—a devastating blow to the English party, who had hoped to convert its home-field advantage into a favorable judgment before the case was ensnared in the papal courts. In the months preceding the abortive legatine trial, Henry had already become suspicious of Wolsey's enthusiasm for the cause; despite the cardinal's long-standing protestations that he was "redy to expone [his] body, life, and blod for the accheving of the same," Henry received reports that both Campeggio and Wolsey could not be trusted.[108] It is generally held that the trial's relocation to Rome sealed Wolsey's fate, and his weakness in its aftermath was apparently not lost upon contemporaries. According to a report in Hall, after the legatine adjournment—and after it had become apparent that "the kings fauor was from the Cardinal sore minished"—the royal council presented Henry with a book of "thirtie and foure" articles against Wolsey; by setting out "with what dissimulacion and clokyng, he had handeled the kynges causes," the cardinal's enemies successfully "moued the kyng against hym" further.[109] After the conclusion of the legatine proceedings in mid-July, Wolsey was quietly barred access from the King's presence, and his role in decision-making was severely restricted.

By early autumn, the writing was on the wall. In mid-September, letters make reference to "the reports which are circulated" against the cardinal, while in a dispatch of October 4th, the French ambassador Cardinal Jean du Bellay remarked that he could "see clearly [that] Wolsey is to lose his influence entirely" in the upcoming session of Parliament.[110] Having failed to make headway in the divorce, and having made an enemy of the would-be Queen Anne, Wolsey was left virtually

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[108] TNA, SP 1/44, fol. 43v. For Wolsey's downfall, see G. W. Bernard, "The Fall of Wolsey Reconsidered," *Journal of British Studies* 35 (1996): 277-310, and the relevant chapters in *KC.*

[109] Hall, *Hall's Chronicle,* p. 759.

[110] *L&P* IV(iii), 5953; 5983.

unprotected. On October 9th, he was formally indicted with the jurisdictional crime of *praemunire*: by exercising his legatine powers on English soil, Wolsey was said to have imported a foreign authority into the realm, to the prejudice of the king's royal prerogative. (That Henry had both enabled and exploited Wolsey's legatine standing for over a decade was ignored.)[111] Wolsey was soon commanded to "surrender and deliver up the Great Seal"; in late October, he admitted to the charge of *praemunire*, and threw himself on the king's mercy.[112]

The initial stage of Wolsey's downfall was complete. He would never regain his former place by Henry's side, and his vast fortunes were confiscated by the crown.[113] Yet his ruin was not final, at least not yet. In the fall of 1529, Henry seems to have had no desire to annihilate his long-trusted minster, and there's even evidence that the king assured Wolsey of his general good standing.[114] With Wolsey in this limbo—disgraced, but not destroyed—his enemies seized the offensive, attempting to muster a mass of evidence too damning to be ignored. In this campaign, the anti-Wolsey sentiment again seems to activate the mechanics of disgust that we have explored throughout this chapter. Wolsey's narrative culminates in this fundamental act of rejection and repulsion: like an ill humour, his malignant influence is drained away from the king and his council, so that new blood (quite literally) might circulate in its place. Even the sudden, surprising charges of *praemunire* mirror this trajectory: Wolsey's legatine authority was construed, appropriately

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[111] On this issue, see my forthcoming essay "The Limits of Diplomacy: Wolsey, *Praemunire*, and the Henrician Diplomatic Imagination," in *Handle With Care: Diplomacy and Early Modern Literature*, ed. William T. Rossiter and Jason Powell (London: Ashgate, 2012).

[112] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, p. 101.

[113] See, for example, *L&P* IV(iii), 6019: "I have heard that Wolsey has just been put out of his house, and all his goods taken into the King's hands….[T]hey accuse him of [so many things] that he is quite undone."

[114] After his arrest, Cavendish reports, Wolsey received good news: "[The king] hath commanded me first to say unto you that you should assure yourself that he beareth you as much good will and favor as ever he did, and willeth you to be of good cheer" (Cavendish, *Life and Death*, p. 176).

enough, as an intruding foreign body, needing to be purged and expelled to restore the integrity of the English realm.

One such example is deployed by the new Lord Chancellor Thomas More, who addressed his predecessor's ground-shaking fall in his opening remarks to the parliament of November 1529. In the midst of a general meditation on the state of the realm, in which King Henry is figured as the nation's shepherd, More reflects upon the recent woes that have plagued the English flock:

> As you se that emongest a great flocke of shepe some be rotte*n* and fauty which the good sheperd sendeth from the good shepe, so the great wether which is of late fallen as you all knowe, so craftely, so scabedly, ye & so vntruly iuggled wyth the kynge.[115]

Given the timing of More's oration, there's little doubt that Wolsey is the anecdote's referent; the new Lord Chancellor takes care to smear his predecessor with the raw material of disgust. We've already seen how the poetic satires regularly dehumanize Wolsey by means of bestial identification, invoking an alleged animality as grounds for moral condemnation. In this wonderful elaboration, it seems to me that More infects the figurative Wolsey with something like hoof-and-mouth disease—he is cast as a markedly ailing animal, a highly communicable threat that must be cast off for the greater good of the flock. "Rotten and fauty" accommodates both the material and moral registers of Wolsey's alleged disease, and More accordingly affirms the proximity of disgust's literal and figurative domains. Wolsey's designation as *wether* pushes the metaphor even further: signifying both a neutered ram (and by natural extension) a courtly eunuch, the term configures the cardinal as a deviant sexual subject, another damning witness to his moral disfigurement. (With this castration, More perhaps also enforces the clerical celibacy that Wolsey infamously flouted.) Little doubt remains when Wolsey is finally denounced as *scabbed*, an image triply suited to More's rhetorical aim: in Henrician usage, the word might entail a "literal skin disease," a "moral or

[115] Hall, *Hall's Chronicle*, p. 764.

spiritual disease," or, a specific "cutaneous disease in animals, esp. sheep."[116] Consistent with the general trend in anti-Wolsey satire, More's oration constructs a cardinal who is repulsively infected, in both body and soul; his rejection from the metaphoric flock was a necessity for the well-being of the whole, as was his purgation from the room of state.

More's rhetoric is echoed (and intensified) elsewhere. To supplement the *praemunire* charge, the House of Lords apparently drafted a more inclusive catalog of Wolsey's offenses. Most of the charges in the forty-four item list concern his abuse of legatine authority, as a clear usurpation of King Henry's royal prerogative. But the sixth item is rather different:

> Whereas your grace is our soveraigne lord and head, in whom standeth all the surety and wealth of this realm; the same lord cardinall knowing himselfe to have the foule and contagious disease of the great pocks broken out upon him in divers places of his body, came daily to your Grace, rowning in your eare and blowing upon your most noble grace with his perilous and infective breath, to the marvellous danger of your highnesse, if God of his infinit goodnesse had not better provided for your highnesse. And when he was once healed of them, he made your grace to believe that his disease was an impostume in his head, and of none other thing.[117]

Hall succinctly confirms the charge that Wolsey, "hayvng the Frenche pockes presumed to come & breth on the kyng."[118] In this passage, we find Wolsey's association with disgust nakedly literalized: not only a symbolic sore on the commonweal, he also imperils the king quite concretely with his infectious breath. Given their general emphasis on Wolsey's coercive influence, the Lords' complaint thus reveals how the literal and metaphoric domains of disgust find respective targets in the king's body natural and his body politic: an assault converging here in the (oral) image of

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[116] *OED*, "scab, *n*." Our most familiar usage—"the crust which forms over a wound or sore during cicatrization"—was available, but apparently less prominent; that is, the association of *scab* with a wound that is specifically *healing* seems not nearly as immediate as it is for us. The force of More's image recalls several notable examples in Shakespeare, such as the "instant tetter" that "barked about / Most lazar-like with vile and loathsome crust" on Old Hamlet's dying body (1.5.73-74), or the hated multitude that Coriolanus addresses as "dissentious rogues / That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion, / Make yourselves scabs" (1.1.161-63).

[117] Edward Coke, *The Fourth Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England* (London, 1797), pp. 89-90.

[118] Hall, *Hall's Chronicle*, p. 768.

Wolsey's whisper (*rowning)*, the unifying act in which the sly minister pollutes the kingdom with his policy and the king with his contagions.[119] This bifurcated sense of disgust is further suggested in the particular emphasis on Wolsey's syphilitic condition; his illness entails not just a corporeal infection, but a moral one as well. Finally, there may be some irony in how the cardinal is said to have obfuscated his specifically venereal illness: though *impostume* had a generalized meaning of sore or abscess, in the sixteenth century it equally developed a figurative sense of "moral corruption in the individual, or insurrection in the state."[120]

But despite the efforts of his opponents, the cardinal endured into the New Year—and in fact, as Henry's position continued to soften, he was granted a pardon in mid-February. In return for this partial restoration, Wolsey was commanded to take residency in York—the seat of his archbishopric, and a diocese in which the absentee cardinal had never set foot—in a domain far removed from court. In the spring and summer months, Wolsey made the slow trek northward, a spatial literalization of his expurgation from Henrician politics. Yet despite his disgrace, observers suggested that the cardinal still cut an impressive figure:

> It has been reported in the court that he rode in such sumptuous fashion that some men thought he was of as good courage as in times past, and that there was no impediment but lack of authority. Certain people came to him, some for debt, and some for restitution of things wrongfully taken by him; to which he answered that the King had all his goods, and he could neither pay nor restore.[121]

The journey north was flush with such moments of image rehabilitation, in which Wolsey embraced (or at least embraced the performance of) a pastoral care that stands in sharp contrast to his conventional guise as the courtly wolf. In his *imitatio Christi*, the abject cardinal embraced in his

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[119] Furthermore, the image of whispering, in which Wolsey's speech is being implanted into the king's brain, (inversely) recalls the ventriloquism described above by Giustiniani, in which the cardinal coopted the king's verbal prerogative.

[120] *OED*, "impostume, *n.* 2.a." The OED first records this metaphoric usage in 1565, though it seems likely that it may have been available earlier.

[121] *L&P* IV(iii), 6335.

parishioners that which might otherwise evoke revulsion: Cavendish records, for example, how Wolsey tended to "fifty-nine poormen whose feet he then wiped, washed, and kissed."[122] As the journey progressed, Wolsey remained a formidable politician, propped by (in Gwyn's words) a "surprising degree of confidence that all would be well."[123]

But the increasing good will of his flock could not save Wolsey from his king—and only months later, in the fall of 1530, further consideration found use at home for a disgraced cardinal. On November 4th, amidst a backdrop of increasing papal resistance to Henry's matrimonial aims, Wolsey was suddenly taken into crown custody for the crime of high treason; the cardinal, it was alleged, had for several months been secretly plotting with the European powers to derail the divorce proceedings and expel Anne Boleyn from Henry's side. The precise motive for this maneuver remains obscure, but it is clear that the King had decided (or, depending on the account, had been convinced) to ruin his *alter rex* completely.[124] In a humiliating parody of his first exile, Wolsey now began the return journey back to the court—where he looked forward not to pomp and splendor, but to certain death.

Wolsey never had to face those charges; he died of illness on November 29th at Leicester Abbey. Accordingly, we'll never know what Henry had planned for his former minister—though it is exceedingly unlikely, perhaps he would have issued a second pardon, or found another way to secure Wolsey's obedience. What is clear, however, is that subsequent accounts of Wolsey's life shared a profound interest in these final days, chronicling the suffering cardinal's decay in rich

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[122] Cavendish, "Life and Death," pp. 136-37.

[123] Gwyn, *KC*, p. 618. When speaking of Wolsey's attempts at popular restoration, it's worth noting that the north was the most active breeding ground of opposition to the Tudor monarchy; as we will see in the next chapter, in only a few years York would spawn the religious uprising known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, the most significant moment of insurrection in Henry's reign. Gwyn, however, reminds that Wolsey had no ties to the Northern gentry—and it is unlikely, he argues, that the cardinal would have been banished northward if he was thought a serious magnet for unrest (*KC*, p. 616).

[124] For discussion, see Bernard, "The Fall of Wolsey," and the final chapters of Gwyn, *KC*.

detail. To conclude my discussion of Cardinal Wolsey and disgust, I want to emphasize the insistent corporality of these passages, which demand that we remain focused on Wolsey's malfunctioning body. They are concerned with the *alimentary* component of the cardinal's painful death, abounding with images of eating, excrement, and vomit. There is thus an implicit irony, a kind of poetic justice, in these portrayals of Wolsey's demise: long cast as a contaminant, a noxious figure whose very presence infected the realm, Wolsey finally finds the tables to be turned. The domains of disgust turn inward, and in a striking act of self-consumption, he becomes destroyed by the same feelings of repulsion and revulsion that he so often invoked in others.

Though doubtless embellished, Cavendish's eyewitness account is the most elaborate chronicle of Wolsey's demise—and it is one that seems strangely keen on foregrounding the gustatory textures of its subject's final days. The motif is established early in the narrative, when, on the evening of his arrest, Wolsey shares a symbolic meal with his servants:

> With that came up my lord's meat, and so we left our communication. I gave him water, and sat him down to dinner….Notwithstanding my lord did eat very little meat, but would many times burst out suddenly in tears with the most sorrowfullest words that hath been heard of any woeful creature. And at the last he fetched a great sigh from the bottom of his heart….[He was] more fed and moisted with sorrow and tears than with either pleasant meats or delicate drinks.[125]

Tears do little to satisfy a man of such infamous appetite: the scene, despite its tenderness, cannot help but parody Wolsey's famous gluttony, which now can do little but vomit sighs. But while food is sublimated in this example, Cavendish goes on to reveal the gruesome materiality of his master's digestion, anticipating the gastric illness that will eventually overtake him.

In a statement that recalls the category of *animal-reminder disgust*, Wolsey feared that he would "die like a beast" on his journey back to London, a remark confirming the sociomoral linkage

[125] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, pp. 163-64.

of human dignity and corporeal integrity.[126] Cavendish, however, does little to shield us from the details of Wolsey's physical deterioration, which is chronicled by moments of agonizing urination and defecation. On one evening, after observers "perceived his color often to change and alter divers times," Wolsey announced that he had been "suddenly taken about my stomach with a thing that lieth overthwart my breast as cold as a whetstone."[127] With the help of an apothecary's purgative, he "avoided exceeding much wind upward," but the relief was only temporary.[128] As the evening continued, there "came upon him such a laske, that it caused him to go to his stool," and later "he rose up, and went into his chamber, to his close stool, the flux troubled him so sore."[129] Plagued with *laske* ("looseness of the bowels, diarrhœa") and *flux* ("an abnormally copious flowing of blood, excrement, etc. from the bowels "), Wolsey's entrails turn inside-out, with a violence that recalls his own sudden expulsion from the court. From this horrific local description, Cavendish next works to quantify his master's agony:

> When night came that we should go to bed, my lord waxed very sick through his new disease, the which caused him continually from time to time to go to the stool all that night; insomuch from the time that his disease took him unto the next day, he had above fifty stools, so that he was that day very weak.[130]

Wolsey's dozens of evacuations serve as a bathetic parallel to the dozens of dishes that once filled his banquet table. In this account, I find it hard to ignore the moral resonance of Wolsey's hyper-purgation; in his final days, the cardinal's long-accumulated sins are slowly (and excruciatingly) drained from his body, in a corporal prelude to the spiritual purification of death.[131]

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[126] Ibid., p. 166.

[127] Ibid., p. 171.

[128] Ibid., p. 172.

[129] Ibid., p. 172; 175.

[130] Cavendish, *Life and Death,* p. 177.

[131] Despite his personal relations with Wolsey, Cavendish's account is no simple hagiography: the cardinal's death, he reflects, reveals "the end and fall of pride and arrogancy of such men, exalted by Fortune to honor and high dignities" (p. 186).

In fact, as the end unfolded, the expulsions of Wolsey's body become an index to his degenerating condition. As Cavendish records, the cardinal himself first proffered the diagnosis:

> The matter that he avoided was wondrous black, the which physicians call choler adustum. And when he perceived it, he said to me, "if I have not some help shortly, it will cost me my life." With that I caused one Doctor Nicholas…to look upon the gross matter that he avoided. Upon sight whereof he determined how he should not live past four or five days.[132]

By reading his own waste, the sorcerer Wolsey performs a *de facto* act of extispicium—though in this demonic divination, it is his own entrails that foretell the future. And, even without the physician's confirmation, Wolsey could see that the end was near: his symptoms, he reflected, promised an imminent "excoriation of the entrails, or frenzy, or else present death….And the best thereof is death."[133] After a farewell to Cavendish and a (famed) speech of repentance, he expired around daybreak the following morning.

Though it is impossible to determine the precise cause of Wolsey's death, there is little doubt that Cavendish encodes his master's suffering in terms that are insistently alimentary. And as suggested by the spectrum of disgust—in which, we've seen, the mechanics of corporal disgust give rise to a host of social elaborations—the thematic matrix of illness, purgation, and excretion that pervades his account is an affective linkage to the revolting sociomoral violations that are levied in the anti-Wolsey satires.[134] The chronicle tradition largely echoes (and in some cases, elaborates) the gastric focus of Cavendish's narrative, ensuring that wretched purgation would mark the standard account of Wolsey's final days. Consistent with early modern physiological theory, the Italian historian (and friend of Machiavelli) Francesco Guicciardini links Wolsey's physical degeneration with a corresponding psychological/dispositional analogue: Wolsey, he

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[132] Ibid., pp. 177-78.

[133] Ibid., p. 183.

[134] That is to say, in the satires, Wolsey is the explicit object of both material and moral disgust; in Cavendish's narrative, the second term is essentially absent, but implied nonetheless through the account of Wolsey's physical degeneration.

notes, "was suddenly taken with a fluxe, engendred either of the humour of disdaine, or of the passion of feare."[135] In his chronicle of the age, Charles Wriothesley curtly observes (without further comment) that some "recken he killed himselfe with purgations"—a statement vague enough, at least as I take it, to entail either (in modern parlance) an unintentional overdose or a doctor-assisted suicide.[136] The more scandalous suggestion is made explicit by an anonymous (and variously reliable) Spanish chronicle of the age, which gossips that Wolsey "tomó alguna ponzoña para morir, por no venir á otra muerte más vergonzosa."[137] This notion of a "more shameful death" reveals an intriguing contest between the domains of disgust: the indignity of corporeal decay is thought preferable to the moral revulsion of dying a traitor in a public spectacle.[138] (Though, to be sure, the manner of Wolsey's agonizing death recalls the execution rites of a common traitor: both entail "excoriation of the entrails.")

It is Hall's account, finally, that offers the most detailed connection between Wolsey's death and his alimentary distress:

> When the Cardinal saw the capitaini of the garde, he was sore astonnyed and shortly became sicke, for then he perceiued some great trouble toward him, and for that cause men sayde that he willingly toke so much qua*n*titie of strong purgacion, that his nature was not able to beare it….[He was then brought to the Abbey of

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[135] Franceso Guicciardini, *The Historie of Guicciardin Conteining the Warres of Italie and Other Partes* (London, 1579), p. 1139. On physiology more generally, see Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[136] Charles Wriothesley, *A Chronicle of England During the Reigns of the Tudors, from A.D. 1485 to 1559*, ed. William Douglas Hamilton, 2 vols. (Westminster, 1875), 1:16. Wriothesley's cousin Thomas began his career in Wolsey's service, and would eventually become Lord Chancellor himself. On early modern purgatives, see the discussion in Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

[137] He "drank some poison to die, to avoid a more shameful death"[my translation]; *Crónica del rey Enrico Octavo de Ingalaterra,* ed. Mariano Roca de Togores Molíns (Madrid, 1874), p. 36.

[138] It is possible, of course, that Wolsey refers simply to the physical shamefulness of the common traitor's death, which was marked by castration, disembowelment, and dismemberment. But given his almost flagrant optimism in the final year, Wolsey (so it seems to me) likely anticipated being spared these horrors, and given a more dignified beheading. Henry's precise intentions are unclear, but see below.

> Leicester], where for very feblenes of nature cause by purgacions and vomites he dyed the second night folowyng.[139]

The scene is concluded with a telling summation: "This Cardinal as you may perceiue in this story was of a great stomacke, for he compted himselfe egall with princes, and by craftie suggestion gatte into his handes innumerable treasure." In early modern usage, the concept of the *stomach* entailed not only "the pipe wherby meate goeth dowen," but also sentiments like "indignation, vehement wrathe, hatrede, and, abhorring of a thing that lyketh not vs"—a set of emotions with an obvious proximity to moralized disgust.[140] In fact, the earliest examples of the verb *to stomach* (as in 1523, when Thomas Cromwell could barely "stomak…the high Inuries done by the saide Francoys") entail *only* the moral application of indignation, resentment, and reluctant toleration: it is not until the eighteeneth century that the verbal form reflects a more literal concern with digestive tolerance.[141] Wolsey was a man of great stomach, both literally and figuratively—and as such, he was a man that routinely activated the affective circuits of disgust, in both how he lived and how he died.

Given the nature of contemporary attacks on Wolsey, it's no surprise that motifs of contamination, illness, and purgation are literalized in the depictions of his death. In such accounts, the metaphors of political disgust are desublimated, inscribing themselves nakedly on Wolsey's increasingly hollow form. The cardinal, in fact, seemed aware of the implicit analogy between this evacuation of his body and the larger evacuation of his moral, even spiritual identity: according to Cavendish, in his final days he referred to himself as "a very wretch, replete with misery, not

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[139] Hall, *Hall's Chronicle*, p. 774, for this and the next quotation.

[140] Thomas Elyot, *Bibliotheca Eliotae Eliotis Librarie* (London, 1542), sig. Ii.vi; see also *OED.* (In fact, some researchers argue that *indignation* is simply the word we use for moralized disgust; see Moll *et al.*, "The Moral Affiliations of Disgust.") Appropriately enough for my affective context, *stomach* might also "designate the inward seat of passion, emotion, secret thoughts, affections, or feelings" (*OED*, *n.* 6.a.)—as in Elizabeth's famous statement, before the troops assembled at Tilbury, that she possessed "the heart and stomach of a king." See Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

[141] Thomas Cromwell, *The Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell*, ed. Roger Bigelow Merriman, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 1:36.

worthy to be esteemed…[,] a vile abject, utterly cast away without desert."[142] This remark is incredibly suggestive, for it is in the discourse of abjection, as famously articulated by Kristeva, that modern critical theory most squarely engages the issue of disgust. As the "jettisoned object" of the symbolic order, the abject exists "on the edge of non-existence and hallucination"; it is those necessary preconditions of existence that must, in their loathsomeness, be forcefully cast from sight.[143] Kristeva explains the notion further in a catalog of abjection:

> Loathing an item of food, a piece of filth, waste, or dung. The spasms and vomiting that protect me. The repugnance, the retching that thrusts me to the side and turns me away from defilement, sewage, and muck. The shame of compromise, of being in the middle of treachery. The fascinated start that leads me toward and separates me from them.

Kristeva's notion of the abject is a meditation on the dynamics of disgust—yet it also helps account for the unmistakable ghostliness of Wolsey's last days. There is little doubt that the ultimate destination of Wolsey's final journey was the executioner's block; when informed of the cardinal's passing, the Spanish chronicler alleges, Henry VIII remarked that "Yo creo que adivinó que yo le queria hacer dar otra muertre."[144] As a walking dead man, Wolsey in his final days typifies the loathsome uncanniness of abjection: he was a grotesque parody of the Cardinal Wolsey who ruled the realm for nearly three decades, an evacuated shell that revealed the ultimate fragility of "identity, system, order."[145] That the chroniclers equally insist upon marking the physical decomposition of Wolsey's body suggests the material analogue to the spiritual exile occasioned by King Henry's rejection. We watch as the cardinal is gradually reduced to a corpse, the form of empty matter that entails "the utmost of abjection."

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[142] Cavendish, *Life and Death*, p. 176.

[143] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 2, for this and the following quotation.

[144] "I suppose he guessed that I wanted to give him a different death" [my translation]; *Crónica del rey Enrico Octavo*, p. 37.

[145] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 4, for this and the following quotation.

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In 1548, the Flemish painter Cornelis Metsys produced an engraving of King Henry VIII, deceased in the previous year.[146] In this image, observes a modern commentator, the king's appearance is "ravaged by a combination of overindulgence, disease, and ever-increasing suspicion of those around him"; this old Henry resembles a fat toad, perched with "shoulders hunched, his face bloated, his mouth pinched, and his wary eyes reduced to mere slits."[147] The king of Metsys's portrait—and the king immortalized in history—bears little physical resemblance to the youthful Henry, whose beauty was sung in the courts of foreign princes:

> And first of all, his Majesty is twenty-nine years old, and extremely handsome; nature could not have done more for him; he is much handsomer than any other sovereign in Christendom, a great deal handsomer than the King of France; very fair, and his whole frame admirably proportioned.[148]

Henry remained the stud of Christendom for the first half of his reign; perhaps having Wolsey to shoulder the daily burden of royal administration helped him keep his youthful countenance. But Henry's reign would have a second half, and age would not prove kind to him within it. At about the time of Wolsey's disgrace, the king first complained of the "sore legge" that would increasingly plague his life; when this ulcerated wound clogged in 1538, Henry was found "without speaking, black in the face, and in great danger," and when the same occurred three years later, he was again "really thought to be in danger."[149] The king's mobility was severely limited, but his appetite did not follow suit; he swelled to infamous proportions, almost certainly dwarfing Wolsey at his portliest. His condition in the final years is perhaps best indicated by an entry in the post-mortem inventory of the royal household: "Twoo Cheyres called trauewes" had been commissioned for the

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[146] Cornelis Metsys, *Henricvs Gra[tie] Rex Anglie* (1548), Folger, ART 252711.

[147] Arthur L. Schwartz, *Vivat Rex!* (New York: The Grolier Club, 2009), p. 205.

[148] Giustiniani, *Four Years*, 2:312.

[149] *The Annals of the Barber-Surgeons of London*, ed. Sidney Young (London, 1890), p. 522; *L&P* XIII(i), 995; XVI, 590.

ailing Henry, "for the kinges Majestie to sitt in to be carried to and fro in his galleries and Chambres."[150] The mighty King Henry VIII—who once, "placing his hand on his thigh," had boasted to an Italian diplomat of what "a good calf" he had—spent his last days being moved by machines, his rotting leg unable to hoist his swollen body.[151] Time, we know, ravages all, but Henry went less gracefully than most, and did so far more publically. As a friend, mentor, and confidant, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey taught Henry VIII many things—including, as history would finally have it, how to be disgusting.

[150] *The Inventory of King Henry VIII: The Transcript*, ed. David Starkey (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1998), p. 263.

[151] Giustiniani, *Four Years*, 2:312.

Chapter 2: The Emotional Practice of *Envy*: Surrey, Richmond, and the Rivalrous Emotions

"By the Masse, now I see that the olde saied sawe is true," erupted Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, as the Blackfriars divorce proceedings of 1529 crumbled before him: "there was neuer Legate nor Cardinall, that did good in Englande."[1] During his ascendency, we have seen, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey evoked widespread disdain in both court and country—perhaps most of all in men like Suffolk. For nearly two decades, the realm's great peers could do little but watch as their share of English governance, an inalienable birthright, was increasingly consumed by the churchman's voracious political appetite.

That Suffolk himself was newly made did little to soothe this sting, and indeed, perhaps intensified it. It was only his grandfather who had managed "to emerge from the obscurity of minor merchant status," and Brandon's own elevation to the dukedom in 1514—ostensibly for service in the French campaign of the previous year, but owing almost entirely to his personal friendship with the king—suspiciously recalled the rise of Wolsey.[2] (The Duke of Buckingham, a man incensed by upstarts lay or clergy, was said to grumble that "the King gave fees and offices to boys, rather than to noblemen.")[3] In just three years, Suffolk had gone from master of the horse to duke of the realm—or, as Erasmus put it (and would later excise from his printed correspondence), "ex Dama procerem fecit."[4] This jab suggests the resemblance of Suffolk and the slave Dama, a horse-keeper in Perseus' Fifth Satire, whose emancipation does little to elevate his inate boorishness:

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[1] Edward Hall, *Chronicle Containing the History of England* (London, 1809), p. 753.

[2] Steven J. Gunn, *Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, c. 1484-1545* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 2.

[3] *L&P* III(i), 1284.

[4] *L&P* I(ii), 2610. "[The king] made a nobleman from Dama/slave." *Damma/dama* (deer; venison) further indicates the association with animal husbandry.

> Alas, barren of truth are they who suppose one dizzy turn
> makes a Roman. Dama here's a two-bob stable-boy,
> red-eyed with plonk, a liar, waters down the animal feed.
> His master gives him a spin, from one short whirl emerges
> *Citizen* Dama. Wowee! [5]

From the stables to a ducal spread, or from a dung cart to Hampton court? "Le *second Roy,"* as Brandon was deemed in 1513 (even before his ennobling), or the infamous *alter rex?*[6] To some, Suffolk and Wolsey were of a similar feather. This was certainly true, as we saw in the last chapter, for one Anthony Irby, who in 1516 condemned the pair for their mutual corruption of the young King Henry: "It is a wonder to see the kyng, how he is ordered now a days, ffor the Cardynall & the duke of Suff*olk*, which the kyng haith brought vpp of noughte, do rewle hym in all thyng*es* [as] they lyst; whedr it be by negramency, wytchecrafte, or pollycy no man knoweth."[7]

In affective terms, the disgust that Wolsey evokes in Suffolk—or that Suffolk evokes in Buckingham and Erasmus, or that both Wolsey and Suffolk evoke in Irby—returns us to Mary Douglas's notion of "matter out of place": in the universe of the Henrician court, these social particles are askew, a misalignment threatening to wreak havoc on the system at large.[8] But it is not simply the threat of contamination that prompts this response, but also that of displacement: in its disruption, the offending matter has usurped a place *from* something else, an object exiled from its native domain. In the zero-sum court of Henrician England, an ambitious social move risked knocking others out of bounds— a maddening, inevitable fact for those who could not help but

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[5] See Llewelyn Morgan, "Satire," in *A Companion to Latin Literature,* ed. S. J. Harrison (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), p. 183, for original text, this translation, and discussion of the passage.

[6] *Lettres du Roi Louis XII et du Cardinal Georges d'Amboise*, ed. François Foppens, 4 vols. (Brussels, 1712), 4:197.

[7] TNA, SP 1/14, fol. 179.

[8] See Chapter 1, p. 21.

watch the game unfold around them. For every Wolsey, there was a Suffolk, and for every Suffolk, a Buckingham; entitlement was an easy thing to have, but harder to hold.

When this center did not hold, the emotional consequences were heavy for those cast off into the periphery. But if a disgust response, as we saw in Chapter 1, is one affective manifestation of social conflict in the courtly sphere—an external performance, directed at the offending, usurping object—it often occurs in conjunction with another emotional reply, far less apt to be publicized, but still vitally shaping to the psychic world in which it manifests: the *envy* that is also evoked by the successful courtly rival, the venom that churns in the guts of the disgusted, usurped observer. A natural (though by no means inevitable) affective companion to disgust, the experience of envying is one of being contaminated by the social maneuvers of another: the rival's engagement with the external world occasions a reciprocal disruption in the internal world of the envier, a reminder of the extent to which their mutual affective fates are entwined. It's no wonder, then, that envy and the related *jealousy* are often called the "rivalrous emotions," a designation that indicates their inherent connection to the world of social combat.[9] The early modern court was nothing if not rivalrous—and understanding the workings of envy, it follows, is central to the task of mapping its affective terrain more generally.

It would be possible to organize such a study around a figure like Wolsey, by considering how an object of obvious disgust and resentment enflamed the envy of those social superiors who were threatened by his advancement. But while certainly valuable, this approach risks obscuring the range of social configurations that are implicated in the domain of the rivalrous emotions. Feelings like envy are not only evoked by the triumphs of our sworn social enemies; the flames of rivalry are so often fanned by the good fortune of strangers, or—it is sometimes difficult to admit—

[9] See, for example, David Konstan and Keith Rutter, eds., *Envy, Spite, and Jealousy: The Rivalrous Emotions in Ancient Greece* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

by the success of friends and allies, whose victories, even as we celebrate them, inflict wounds both gentle and ungentle. To demonstrate such situational variety, I will consider in this chapter how envy (and the related rivalrous emotions) operate in a context that is perhaps initially counterintuitive: the structure of an early modern elegy.

My analysis centers on one of the most remarkable poems of Henrician literature: "So crewell prison" (c. 1537), the Earl of Surrey's haunting memorial to his boyhood friend Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond—better known to history as the illegitimate son of King Henry VIII, deceased suddenly in his late teens. After even a cursory reading of "So crewell prison," it is difficult to remain unmoved by the tenderness of Surrey's commemoration: cast as a reflection on the experience of shared adolescence, the elegy offers an astonishingly intimate glance into the formative years of two of Henrician England's most powerful young men. Indeed, it is this very intimacy that has most inspired the poem's commentators, who have fastened on the extent to which it invites an erotic reading of Surrey and Richmond's adolescent relationship; the best studies have proposed that such eroticism participates in a larger cultural network of patronage, politics, and power.[10]

While such efforts have contributed suggestively to our understanding of "So crewell prison," I believe that they have not accounted fully for the process of mourning enacted in the poem—and in fact, that a critical focus that privileges eroticism risks obscuring the larger emotional dynamic that governs Surrey's grief. In this chapter, I will thus try to unpack a very different side of the Surrey/Richmond relationship, and a very different side of "So crewell prison": the variety of feelings, often in contention, that attach to this friendship, and the variety of feelings that emerge from Surrey's elegiac performance. While elements of eroticism are indeed latent in

[10] See Candace Lines, "The Erotic Politics of Grief in Surrey's 'So Crewell Prison,'" *SEL* 46 (2006): 1-26; and Stephen Guy-Bray, "'We Two Boys Together Clinging': The Earl of Surrey and the Duke of Richmond," *English Studies in Canada* 21 (1995): 138-50.

the Richmond elegy, I will argue that the poem's primary emotional subtext registers a different kind of impulse. Composed during a period of personal turmoil for Surrey—after an act of violence at court, he had been imprisoned in the same grounds where as a youth he lived with Richmond—the poem reveals, like so much of Surrey's work, the poet's profound ambivalence toward the Henrician political world that inscribed his identity, and his profound ambivalence toward the friend (and symbolic kinsman) whose unexpected death left him to negotiate its corridors alone. "So crewell prison" records Surrey's idyllic fantasies of adolescence as those very fantasies were being shattered, and the resultant tension is deeply rooted within the emotional syntax of the elegy: despite the poem's overt tenderness, Richmond's memory also proves to be an active site of envy, jealousy, and aggression for the bereaved Surrey.

In this chapter, I attempt to elucidate this alternate affective node, in order to construct a more complete emotional profile of Surrey's poetic persona in "So crewell prison," and to suggest the larger importance of envy to the social and literary world of the early modern court. To excavate these rivalrous emotions, I turn first to Surrey and Richmond's lived relationship, and secondly to the mechanics of envy and jealousy as they are understood both by modern researchers and their early modern counterparts. There is a darker side to Surrey's grief, and this ambivalent, rivalrous energy is a crucial counterweight to the poem's eroticized idealization—a reflection of the poet's broader struggle to secure his place within the tumultuous world of the Henrician court.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF HENRY FITZROY

As readers have long observed, "So crewell prison" offers a moving depiction of Surrey and Richmond's personal friendship. At the remove of some four hundred years, however, what is not as apparent is Richmond's identity as a figure of national consequence in Henrician England. Despite his illegitimacy, Henry Fitzroy was the only surviving royal son in the first half of King

Henry's reign, and the details of his brief life are accordingly chronicled in the dispatches of ambassadors, councilors, and courtiers.[11] Fitzroy's symbolic importance to English politics provides the civic context to Surrey's personal grief, and the action of the elegy variously engages both the private and the public consequences of his friend's untimely death. But Richmond remains relatively obscure to many modern readers of "So crewell prison," whose engagement with the young duke seldom exceeds the bounds of his traditional resting place, the brief explanatory footnote. To appreciate fully the force of Surrey's elegy, it is necessary first to excavate the historical Richmond, in order to gauge his significance both to Surrey and to the English body politic.

As the sexual appetite of Henry VIII is a cornerstone of modern lore about the king, it is a bit surprising to find that Henry Fitzroy was the only illegitimate child to be recognized during his long stay on the English throne. And despite his son's bastardy, King Henry wasted little time in grooming him for a future place in English politics. After his birth in 1519, Fitzroy was immediately entrusted to Wolsey's care, and the boy was only six when his elevation to the dukedoms of Richmond and Somerset in 1525 made him England's most decorated peer. As the nominal head of the Crown's revived attempt to establish conciliar management in the north, Richmond spent his early years among his own full-scale household at Sheriff Hutton, where he was immersed in both humanist learning and the aristocratic arts—an educational regime apt for a boy many already thought could one day rule the realm. In 1529 he served a short term as nominal Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and in the same year, the ten-year old boy was summoned to the first sessions of what would come to be known as the Reformation Parliament.

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[11] For a modern biography of Fitzroy, see Beverley Anne Murphy, *Bastard Prince: Henry VIII's Lost Son* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2001).

It was also in 1529 that Richmond entered the orbit of the Howard family: after Wolsey's fall his care was transferred to Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, uncle of the increasingly influential Anne Boleyn and father to the then twelve-year old Earl of Surrey. Almost immediately, Norfolk took steps to forge a bond between the promising royal child and his own precocious son—who was, according to the Imperial ambassador Chapuys, already writing letters in "very good Latin." At a private meeting in December of 1529, Norfolk informed Chapuys of this "project which he had":

> The King has entrusted to me the education of his bastard son, the duke of Richmond, of whom my own son may become in time preceptor and tutor, that he may attain both knowledge and virtue, so that a friendship thus cemented promises fair to be very strong and firm.[12]

Though a Howard relation was already sharing the King's bedchamber, this was not enough for Norfolk, ever the patriarch; it was by means of Surrey and Richmond's projected friendship that he hoped to secure a place for the Howards in England's long-term, post-Henrician future.

In April 1530 Richmond left Sheriff Hutton for his new residence at Windsor, where he and Surrey spent several years leading the life recalled in "So crewell prison." Their growing friendship took the boys beyond Windsor's walls, and in the autumn of 1532 Richmond and Surrey accompanied the royal train to Calais on its diplomatic mission to secure French support for King Henry's on-going divorce proceedings. After Henry returned to England in November, Richmond and Surrey remained with the French court, as pledge of the pending Franco-English treaty; entertained by the French princes, the boys wintered in Paris, enjoyed spring at the magnificent Palace of Fontainebleau, and spent the summer touring the southern provinces on progress with King Francis. Recalled to England in September 1533, they became further entwined when Richmond was wed to Surrey's sister Mary in that November (though the couple's youth prevented

[12] *CSPS,* IV(i), 228.

the union from being consummated). Fitzroy's death in July 1536 was sudden: Chapuys reports on the 8th of that month that Richmond had been judged "consumptive, and incurable," and on the 18th Lord Lisle in Calais was similarly informed by his servant Husee that "my lorde of Rychemonde [is] very syck."[13] King Henry, who had both personal and political stake in his son's health, was especially distraught, and Chapuys wrote to his superiors that Henry had "no hope that the duke of Richmond can live long, whom he certainly intended to make his successor, and but for his illness, would have got him declared so by parliament."[14]

On the 22nd of July, the seventeen-year old Richmond "departed out of this transitorie lief at the Kinges place in Sainct James."[15] His son's death could not have come at a more politically volatile time for Henry: just months earlier, the king had executed his second wife and married his third, and it was only days before Fitzroy's death that Parliament had finalized its attempt to give shape to the now-muddled succession. Though details remain unclear, it seems that Henry did not want the distraction and stress of a public funeral for Richmond: on Aug 3rd, Chapuys reported that the body "has been secretly carried in a wagon, covered with straw, without any company except two persons clothed in green, who followed at a distance, into Norfolk, where the Duke his father-in-law will have him buried."[16] Unfortunately for Norfolk, however, the job was apparently bungled, and the duke soon found himself a victim of Henry's famous temper. With a hand "full full full of color and agonye," Norfolk attempted to defend his performance to Thomas Cromwell, the King's principal secretary:

> this nyght at viij a cloke came dyuers l*ett*res to me fro*m* my frend*es* and *ser*uant*es* abowt*es* london all agreing in one tale, not a litle to my sorow, that the kyng*es*

[13] *L&P* XI, 40; TNA, SP 1/105, fol. 74.

[14] *L&P* XI, 147.

[15] Charles Wriothesley, *A Chronicle of England During the Reigns of the Tudors, from A.D. 1485 to 1559*, ed. William Douglas Hamilton, 2 vols. (Westminster, 1875), 1:53.

[16] *L&P* XI, 221.

> highnes shuld be in gret displesure w*ith* me because my lord of richmond was not carried honorably and so buryed: my lord I dout not ye know the kyng*es* plesure was that his body shuld be conveyed secretly in a close cart vnto thedford and at my sewte thider and there so buryed; and accordyng to the same I sent order w*ith* both the cottons and co*m*manded them that his body shall haue be wrapped in lede and a close cart provyded for hym, whose body was neyther put in lede nor no close cart provyded for him nor yet conveyed veray secretly.[17]

It's tempting to wonder what role Cromwell, who only weeks earlier had been raised to the peerage as Baron of Wimbledon, may have played in rousing Henry's anger; the fall of Anne Boleyn heralded a period of vulnerability for the Howard clan, with whom Cromwell perennially quarreled until his execution in 1540. Fortunately for Norfolk, the matter was soon forgotten by the King—but not, we might imagine, by Surrey, whose virtuoso poetic commemoration in "So crewell prison" is a natural counterpoint to Richmond's unexpectedly humble burial. At the very least, we do know that the earl remained devastated by his friend's death; some time later, Surrey was described by his father as still "very weke, his nature ron*n*yng from hym habundan*n*tlie...for thought of my lord of Richemond."[18]

But unfortunately for the earl, there would be little time to grieve in the immediate wake of Richmond's death. October 1536 marked the beginning of the popular religious uprisings known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, and both Norfolk and Surrey played strategic roles in their eventual suppression. In early 1537, order was finally reestablished after a confused campaign, and in the conflict's aftermath Surrey remained from court on account of illness.[19] When he rejoined the court

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[17] TNA, SP 1/105, fol. 248. George Cotton was the gentleman usher and "somtyme gou*er*nor to the late Duke of Richmont" (SP 1/107, fol. 88); his brother Richard was the clerk comptroller of Richmond's household. See Charles John Longcroft, *A Topographical Account of The Hundred of Bosmere, In The County of Southampton Including The Parishes of Havant, Warblington, and Hayling* (London, 1857), p. 329.

[18] TNA, SP 1/122, fol. 237. According to Norfolk, Surrey had been sick with grief for "a great p*ar*te of the last yere."

[19] As we will see, Surrey here anticipates a maneuver of the great Elizabethan favorites, such as the earls of Leicester and Essex, who routinely feigned sickness for strategic ends. George

in July, the specter of the Pilgrimage brought with it disastrous consequences: in an infamous episode, Surrey struck another courtier (traditionally said to be Edward Seymour, brother of the pregnant queen) to defy the treasonous charge that the Howards had secretly sympathized with the Catholic rebels.[20] Though respect for Surrey's rank spared the loss of his hand (the routine penalty for acts of violence within the bounds of court), the twenty-year old earl was nonetheless reprimanded and confined to Windsor in July of 1537—a palace still haunted by the memory of Richmond, who had been dead for only a year.[21] "So crewell prison" is the product of both this period of custody and Surrey's lasting grief.

Surrey, to be sure, was greatly moved by the loss of his closest companion; though destined to outlive his friend by only a decade, he never in his adult life seems to have matched the *amicitia perfecta* he enjoyed with Richmond. Yet to understand the full complexity of this bond, it is necessary to say another word about Surrey's emotional profile. Surrey enacted, and perhaps helped inaugurate, a social archetype that would become increasingly prevalent throughout the sixteenth century. I mean the angry young man of privilege, who found his way of apprehending the world—one defined by warfare, neo-chivalric cults of honor, and a masculine investment in the aristocratic arts—perilously threatened by a changing social order, in which kings and queens were happy to raise an army of bureaucrats and middlemen to administer their increasingly centralized realms.[22] Though noblemen like Surrey continued to serve a crucial function in England's political

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Puttenham, for example, noted that a courtly poet may "feign himself sick to shun the business in court." See *AEP,* p. 379.

[20] See William A. Sessions, *Henry Howard, the Poet Earl of Surrey: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 129-30. See also Edwin Casady's *Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey* (New York: MLA, 1938).

[21] See 33 Henry VIII c.12, *Statutes of the Realm*, 11 vols. (London, 1810-28), 3:845-50. This "Acte for Murther and malicious Bloodshed within the Courte" codified the standing penalties for violence near the King in 1541.

[22] On this phenomenon generally, see *SPC,* pp. 416-65.

hierarchy, they found far less room to actualize their own ambitions, and many developed a temperament marked by frustration, impulsivity, and recklessness—especially toward the hated social upstarts (like Seymour), whom they saw as usurping the nobility's God-given role as monarchal advisers.

Surrey exemplified this brand of sixteenth-century man; as we will see in the following chapters, Sir Philip Sidney was of this type, as certainly was the infamous Earl of Essex at the end of Elizabeth's reign. And though these flames burned bright, they also burned fast: Sidney died in war at 32 years old, while Surrey and Essex died by the axe at 30 and 36. In his short life, Surrey was imprisoned at least three times for unsanctioned violence; it was only his rank (as we saw above) that spared him a harsher punishment. As Surrey was supremely aware, the distant blood of royalty was in his veins—and in the tense, last months of King Henry's reign, he was accused of plotting to seize the crown himself from the young Prince Edward.[23] Though these charges didn't stick, Surrey was finally deemed guilty of quartering in his badge the ancient arms of Edward the Confessor: an implicit claim of royalty (so it was construed), and thus an implicit threat to the king's prerogative. This heraldic crime was enough for Surrey to lose his head in January 1547, the last man executed in Henry's long, bloody reign.[24]

Surrey's sensitivity to matters of precedence, honor, and social standing ultimately cost him his life. When reading "So crewell prison," I think it is thus important to consider what else, besides grief, he might have felt toward Richmond, both before and after his death. It's possible to speculate, especially when we reframe the question: what else did Surrey, at the ages of both

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[23] See Peter R. Moore, "The Heraldic Charge Against the Earl of Surrey, 1546-47," *English Historical Review* 116 (2001): 557-83.

[24] Holinshed famously records the (dubious) claim, circulated in the reign of King Edward, that Henry VIII had executed "thréescore and twelue thousand"—and that figure just includes the "great théeues, pettie théeues and roges." See Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, 6 vols. (London, 1807-8), 1:314. As far as I can tell, there is nothing close to a scholarly consensus about the extent of the bloodshed in Henry's reign.

thirteen and twenty, feel toward the best friend who was younger, but of a higher rank; who was illegitimate, but was a royal son; and who was, by many accounts, being groomed to rule the realm? How did a young man of Surrey's volatile temperament respond to this unique playmate, the only adolescent in the realm whose standing surpassed his own?

Though any answers must be tentative, we can grid what we know of Surrey into the larger social matrix that underpinned Henrician aristocratic culture. This task must take its bearing in the familial interplay of Howard and Tudor—a relationship of enormous psychic complexity, perhaps most of all to Surrey. What did it mean to Surrey that he was a Howard, and what did it mean that he was *not* a Tudor—and how did the answers to such questions inflect his friendship with Richmond? Buried in the Howard family's ancestral tomb, Richmond was something of an honorary Howard; for his own part (as we will see below), Surrey often indulged in fantasies that seem to efface the distinction between Howard and Tudor. But such fantasies were just that: Surrey was not a Tudor, and his increasingly flagrant insistence on the Howard family's ancestral royalty suggests the envy and aggression that likely attached to such projections and identifications. There are many reasons to suspect that Surrey's response to Richmond's death was profoundly ambivalent, underpinned by the long-fought competition of two powerful feelings: the idyllic fantasy of sameness, in which he and Richmond lived and ruled the realm together as brothers, and the agonizing reality of difference, that cold-blooded cultural logic that finally assured that Surrey and Richmond were not the same, and that Howard was not Tudor.

When reading the poem, this is the question I'd like us to keep in mind: is it reasonable to believe that a man like Surrey, whose concern with matters of honor and precedence was arguably pathological, would have felt no envy, no resentment, and no anger at the superior fortune of his friend? I think the answer is a resounding no, and that the manifest grief of "So crewell prison" is undercut throughout by a darker affective register. More specifically, I detect in the poem a node

comprised of the rivalrous emotions I introduced above: envy, jealousy, and intense aggression. In "So crewell prison," it is possible to explore the poem's contestatory energy across these distinct, yet affiliated emotions; their collective operation, I suggest, fuels the ambivalence that ultimately shapes the expression of Surrey's grief.

THE PRACTICE OF ENVY

For the reasons discussed above, envy seems to have been a core component of Surrey's emotional profile.[25] But what, precisely, characterizes the phenomenon of envy? Despite its apparent universality—recent affect scholars note that nearly "all cultures have a word meaning something close to envy, even though words for other common social phenomena may be absent"—defining the sentiment is deceptively difficult.[26] In contemporary English, this confusion arises largely from a lexical imprecision: in common usage, the word *envy* is often exchanged freely with overlapping terms like *jealousy* or *resentment*. Yet both philosophical and empirical research insists upon the importance of distinguishing envy from the related rivalrous emotions, and this taxonomy will be central to my subsequent discussion of "So crewell prison."

Most basically, of course, envy is the discomfort we feel at another's good fortune, the pain that accompanies the recognition of "another's superior quality, achievement, or possession."[27] To experience envy, however, is to experience any number of concurrent feelings, and the variegated nature of its pain suggests that envy is a compound emotion: as Maria Miceli and Cristiano Castelfranchi note, envy can be theorized across a variety of affective registers, including [*longing-*

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[25] On envy as a character trait, see Richard H. Smith *et al.,* "Dispositional Envy," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 25 (1999): 1007-20.

[26] Smith *et al.,* "Dispositional Envy," p. 1007; see also Helmut Schoeck*, Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour* (New York: Harcout, Brace & World, 1969).

[27] W. Gerrod Parrott and Richard H. Smith, "Distinguishing the Experiences of Envy and Jealousy," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 64 (1993): 908.

greed-covetousness], [*admiration-emulation*], [*anger-resentment-sense of injustice*], and [*depression-despair-inferiority*].[28] Like many emotions, a degree of cognitive appraisal is crucial in the envious subject, but it is the specifically *comparative* nature of envy—the awareness of one's own lack and another's intolerable gain—that distinguishes it from non-differentiated hostility or antagonism. As this unfavorable comparison becomes embedded in feelings of social inferiority, the subject's self-respect is accordingly threatened; this affective mechanism proves especially intense for a man like Surrey, for whom social standing is paramount.[29] This is because envy (as well as jealousy) is most powerful when a rival threatens some domain that we have deemed central to our sense of self:

> The critical variable that determines whether the successes of close others make us feel good about ourselves (reflection) or have the opposite effect (comparison) is the *relevance* of the other's success or personal qualities to our self-definition. Reflection results when the other's performance is in an unimportant domain. We are motivated to maintain high self-evaluation, so we bask in the reflected glory of our friends' unimportant (to us) successes because they are not threatening to us. But when personal relevance (i.e., domain importance) is high, we are likely to experience envy or jealousy.[30]

Richmond was a rival that could inflame Surrey like no other. As this passage suggests more generally, however, the envier's precise attitude *vis-à-vis* the rival (and thus the coveted advantage) is contextually dependent, leading to an affective field that is often contested; this dynamic reflects the ambivalence that I will locate in "So crewell prison." Recent research suggests that there are at least two distinct forms of envy, unique in their associated thoughts and actions: the *malicious* (or *true*) envier longs to destroy the rival's advantage, whereas the *benign* envier (free of venom, but

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[28] Maria Miceli and Cristiano Castelfranchi, "The Envious Mind," *Cognition & Emotion* 21 (2007): 450.

[29] See Robert H. Smith *et al*., "Subjective Injustice and Inferiority as Predictors of Hostile and Depressive Feelings in Envy," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 20 (1994): 705-11.

[30] Peter Salovey and Judith Rodin, "Provoking Jealousy and Envy: Domain Relevance and Self-Esteem Threat," *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 10 (1991): 397.

not frustration) aspires to join the rival in the desired position.[31] Envy is an amorphous emotion, capable of evoking a multitude of concurrent responses: the envier is tortured both by an attraction to the desired object and by the venom occasioned by its distance.

In early Tudor England, envy was an equally vexed concept. The English *envy* ultimately derives from the Latin *invidia*/*invidere*, to look upon (*in* + *videre*) with malice, scorn, or rivalry; the basic sense of malicious envy was thus actively used in the period, as Renaissance thinkers inherited a classical and medieval Christian framework that denounced *invidia* among the deadliest of sins.[32] In Thomas Wilson's *A Christian Dictionarie*, *Enuie* is neatly defined as that "affection which makes men grieue & fret at the good and prosperity of others," and the *Enuious* soul as one "who repineth and grutcheth at the welfare and happinesse of others."[33] In the Renaissance emblem tradition, the conventional iconography of *invidia* (emerging from Ovid) portrays Envy as a gaunt, haggard woman, who is imagined "fast gnawing on the flesh / Of Snakes and Todes, the filthie foode that keepes hir vices fresh."[34] Whitney's collection offers a typical example in its commentary:

> This, Enuie is: leane, pale, and full of yeares,
> Who with the blisse of others pines awaie.
> And what declares, her eating vipers broode?
> That poysoned thoughtes, bee euermore her foode.[35]

In *The Faerie Queene* Spenser adapts this traditional iconography in his famous portrayal of Envie:

> inwardly he chawed his own maw
> At neibors welth, that made him euer sad;

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[31] See Niels van de Ven, Marcel Zeelenberg, and Rik Pieters, "Leveling Up and Down: The Experiences of Benign and Malicious Envy," *Emotion* 9 (2009): 419-29.

[32] The association of envy and visual appraisal is made explicit, for example, when Bacon describes how frustrated courtiers "become secretly discontent, and look upon men and matters with an evil eye." For this passage and discussion, see *A&P*, p. 173.

[33] Thomas Wilson, *A Christian Dictionarie* (London, 1612), p.126.

[34] *Metamorphosis*, 2.959-60.

[35] Geffery Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes, and Other Deuises, For The Moste Parte Gathered Out of Sundrie Writers, Englished And Moralized* (London, 1586), p. 94.

> For death it was, when any good he saw,
> And wept, that cause of weeping none he had,
> But when he heard of harme, he wexed wondrous glad.[36]

Closer to Surrey's time, Alexander Barclay's *Shyp of Folys* (a translation/adaptation of Sebastian Brant's late-15th century *Das Narrenschiff*) offers a similar depiction of those "whiche greatly them delyte / In others losse":

> If one haue plenty of treasour and ryches
> Or by his merytis obteyne great dignyte
> These folys enuyous that of the same haue les
> Enuy by malyce / the others hye degre
> And if another of honour haue plente
> They it enuy and wysshe that they myght sterue….
> These folys desyre agaynst both lawe and right
> Anoters good if they may get the same
> If they may nat by flaterynge nor by myght
> Than by fals malyce they hym enuy and blame.[37]

In its basic components—the painful desire to level another's advantage—the sense of malicious envy in early modern English was quite similar to the modern definitions we have seen above.

Yet Renaissance thinkers also utilized a concept of benign envy, even if no such semantic category existed. Consider, for example, the reaction of Sir William Cornwallis to the heroes of the ancient world:

> When I heare of any famous Action of our time… it takes away my sleepe, not with Enuie, but with an honest Emulation. I desire to robbe no man of his Glory, but to participate with Experience: well it pleaseth not my Destiny, I hope it will do, that's

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[36] *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 2001), I.iv.30.5-9. See also V.xii.28-37, where Enuie and Detraction aid the Blatant Beast in their assault of Artegall; I treat this passage briefly in the next chapter.

[37] Alexander Barclay, *Stultifera Nauis [This Present Boke Named The Shyp Of Folys]* (London, 1509), sig. t.iiv. As the concluding lines of this passage suggest, envy also had a formal identity in the conventions of Renaissance satire; with this envy *topos*, early modern satirists denounced their enemies, critics, and slanderers with the familiar epithets of railing, barking, and biting. See R.B. Gill, "The Renaissance Conventions of Envy," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 9 (1979): 215-30. The barker/biter motif of Renaissance derision recalls Wolsey's canine form, and the focus on both orality and animality that we saw in the discourse of disgust.

> my Comfort: In the meane time I will see Battailes in Imagination, and reade them, since I may not be in them.[38]

As Cornwallis makes clear, this desire to emulate is not predicated on robbing another of his glory, or destroying the object of envy. Yet the feeling that disturbs his sleep seems hardly pleasant, and is therefore distinct from the less agitative positions of *admiration* or *reverence*. Despite his protestation, Cornwallis describes the emotional configuration of benign envy, even though the term was not linguistically native to the early modern period.

In fact, Cornwallis's professed distinction between envy and emulation reveals another contour to the early modern understanding of envy. Despite the common impulse to keep both terms distinct—such as in the late sixteenth-century treatise that distinguishes "countentious enuies" from "honest emulations"— the word *envy* was nonetheless also used in the period to signify an emotionally neutral, or even admirable, form of emulation.[39] This lexical overlap was certainly native to Surrey's period: in *The Image of Gouernance* (1541), Sir Thomas Elyot describes how a counselor of high merit will "ingender in noble men an honest enuy, eyther to excede hym in vertue, or at the leste to be iudged equall vnto hym," while John Palsgrave (incidentally, Richmond's former tutor) imagines that his translation of a neo-Latin classroom drama will move "some lyttell grayne of honeste and vertuous enuye" in the hearts of King Henry's subjects.[40] In fact, some modern studies of envy have also argued for the emotional specificity of emulation, an orientation in which "there is no ill will towards the advantaged party," an innocuous rival perceived merely

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[38] Sir William Cornwallis, *Essayes* (London, 1600), sig. Lvii-Lvii^{v}.

[39] E.A., *The Politicke and Militarie Discourses of the Lord de La Nouue* (London, 1588), p. 269.

[40] Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Image of Gouernance Compiled of the Actes and Sentences Notable, of the Moste Noble Emperour Alexander Seuerus* (London, 1541), p. 47^{v}; John Palsgrave, *Ioannis Palsgraui Londoniensis, Ecphrasis Anglica in Comoediam Acolasti, The Comedye of Acolastus Translated into Oure Englysshe Tongue, After Suche Maner as Chylderne are Taught in the Grammer Schole* (London, 1540), sig. bi^{v}.

"as an example to follow (and possibly surpass)."[41] Though it is not necessary here to enumerate the precise differences between benign envy and emulative envy (a subject on which scholars disagree), it is important to note that there is a category of emotional response (often labeled "envy" in modern *and* early modern speech) that entails not pain, but genuine feelings of admiration and inspiration at another's advantage. Whether or not we deem such feelings a species of envy, the larger point remains: notions of envy and emulation are entwined, suggesting the ambivalence so often evoked by another's social superiority.

With these dynamics of envy in mind, I'll now turn to the poem itself. Despite its obvious elegiac action, "So crewell prison" is also inundated with the emotional investments I have outlined above in my taxonomy of envy: a tangled network of malice, desire, admiration, emulation, and (above all) ambivalence.

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At Windsor Castle in the summer of 1537, Surrey found a ready circumstance to conjure the memory of his childhood friend. Though a meditation on the poet's past, "So crewell prison" takes its bearing from this contextualized present, and it is in this manner that Surrey compounds the generic action of elegy by dramatizing the act of memory that inspires the elegy itself. A foundational motif throughout Surrey's work, memory thematically governs such poems as "When raging love with extreme pain" and "Dyvers thy death doo dyverslye bemone," as well as (and perhaps most prominently) his translation of the *Aeneid.* In "So crewell prison," however, the mechanics of memory are uniquely doubled: the poem recalls both a person and a place, and it reveals how such memories necessarily overlap.

Though Henry Fitzroy becomes the eventual subject of "So crewell prison," the poem begins with an address to Windsor itself:

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[41] Miceli and Castelfranchi, "The Envious Mind," p. 473.

So crewell prison howe could betyde, alas,
As prowde Wyndsour, where I in lust and joye
With a kinges soon my childishe yeres did passe,
In greater feast then Priams sonnes of Troye.[42]

By outlining the poem's topographical and temporal scope, this apostrophe introduces the atmosphere of ambiguity that underpins "So crewell prison." The tangled syntax of the first two lines, which collapses "prison" into "Wyndsour," reflects the poet's disorienting confinement within a familiar setting, while Surrey analogously disrupts the poem's temporal frame by invoking complementary images from both the personal and the (mytho)historical past. As a site of memory, Windsor becomes conflicted ground: its celebration of Richmond is occasioned only by his death, while Surrey's return to this generative site comes under rather unpleasant circumstances. The hostile Windsor of 1537, tortured by this paradox, becomes the natural analogue to the prelapsarian Windsor of Surrey's youth—until, that is, the poem reveals that even this memory of Windsor is subject, in more subtle form, to the emotional complexity that characterizes the poet's description of his present state.

If it is hard to square the Windsor of the past with the Windsor of the present, Surrey's celebratory comparison of Windsor and Troy is also troubled. In the most basic sense, the image is tempered by the reader's knowledge of Troy's ultimate collapse—a fact that casts a shadow over Surrey's recollection, and that prefigures the conceptual fall of Windsor in the wake of Richmond's death. But the precise terms in which Surrey frames this association are suggestive. On one hand, yoking Troy and Windsor has an obvious attraction; as Candice Lines notes, with this image Surrey effectively "writes himself into the royal family, as Richmond's brother and as a king's son himself."[43] For a man supremely sensitive of his royal blood, Surrey was taken by a fantasy that

[42] "So crewell prison," in *Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey: Poems*, ed. Emrys Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), lines 1-4. Subsequent citations to Surrey's poetry will refer to this edition.

[43] Lines, "Erotic Politics," p. 4.

enrolls him in the Tudor lineage—and where, as the elder (and the legitimate), he assumes the role of heir presumptive.

But despite this idealization, a set of darker associations also lurks in the margins of this metaphor. If Surrey and Richmond stand as the Trojan royal sons, Henry VIII must figure as King Priam—a particularly ominous identity for Henry, when considered next to the brutal rendition of Priam's death (by the hand of Pyrrhus) that Surrey would later translate in the *Aeneid*:

> At the altar him trembling gan he draw
> Wallowing through the blodshed of his son;
> And his left hand all clasped in his heare,
> With his right arme drewe fourth his shining sword,
> Which in his side he thrust up to the hilts.[44]

As Henry was the author of Surrey's Windsor imprisonment, it is tempting to imagine that a fantasy of revenge against the king may reside in the contextual outskirts of the Richmond elegy. Furthermore, the very association of Henry and Priam has an inherent ironic currency, as the symbolically fecund Priam (with his fifty sons) stands as the crushing inverse to Henry's own generative difficulties. And the image has a final twist when we recall that Pyrrhus *also* slaughtered several of Priam's sons. Polites, the most notable case, is gruesomely described by Surrey as

> fleing fourth till he came now in sight
> Of his parentes, before their face fell down,
> Yelding the ghost, with flowing streams of blood.[45]

If Surrey is associated with Pyrrhus, the logic of the metaphor suggests that he harbors latent aggression not only toward King Henry, but also to Richmond, and even to himself—the poet casts himself explicitly as a Trojan prince, and implicitly as a Trojan-slaughterer. Though Surrey had probably not yet come to translate his *Aeneid* in 1537, he was undoubtedly aware of the metaphor's implications: by beginning his elegy with the comparison of Windsor to Troy, he introduces an

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[44] Book II, lines 716-20, in *Surrey: Poems.* Of course, Surrey here anticipates *Hamlet* 2.2, in which Priam's murder is invoked in a similar context of (contested) mourning.

[45] Ibid., lines 688-90.

emotional ambivalence that will increasingly preoccupy the poem.[46] Surrey's status as a son of Troy is a site of both idealization and aggression, conflicting emotional responses that come to define the poet's attitude to his lost friend.

It should also be clear how the double logic of the opening stanza replicates the emotional architecture I have associated with envy. By effacing the hereditary distinction between Surrey and Richmond, and by insisting instead on their symbolic equivalency as Trojan princes, the poem enacts the behavioral profile associated with benign envy: it eliminates the social disparity by elevating Surrey to a position coequal to the rival's advantage. Yet, given the ominous history of Troy, the metaphor equally contains a violent, malicious fantasy, culminating in the destruction of both the rival and his advantage: a textbook enactment of the so-called "true" envy. "Upward social comparison," observes Richard H. Smith and his colleagues, "often represents an unattainable, frustrated desire, invidiously personified in the advantaged person."[47] And, as further research suggests, the pain and frustration of such upward social comparison is amplified enormously when the envied party's advantage seems to be absolute: like, for example, the inscrutable cultural logic that assured social preference to the younger Richmond, despite his youth and bastardy.[48] Given this context, I suggest that Surrey harbored no small amount of this social envy, and the opening lines of "So crewell prison" reveal the poet vacillating between an emulous love for his symbolic brother and a malicious aggression toward his social superior.

As the poem continues, Surrey depicts a variety of scenes which similarly enact this ambivalence, and which trigger the emotional configurations of envy. Masculine contests are a

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[46] Sessions, *Henry Howard*, pp. 266-67, suggests that Surrey probably didn't begin his translation until 1543.

[47] Smith *et al.,* "Dispositional Envy," p. 1009.

[48] Maria Testa and Brenda Major, "The Impact of Social Comparisons After Failure: The Moderating Effects of Perceived Control," *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 11 (1990): 205-18.

primary occasion in which Richmond is remembered—and though these activities certainly depict the tender act of adolescent bonding, they also introduce to the poem a more explicit dynamic of rivalry, standing as a narrative analogue to Surrey's emotional ambivalence. Athletic competition was a cornerstone of Surrey and Richmond's boyhood training in the aristocratic arts; such contests form a central motif of Surrey's recollection, animating much of the poem's charm and pathos. These artificial combats, however, carry a sense of both contention and intimacy, and I think that the aggression they entail may be thought to channel Surrey's envious, emulous relationship to his friend. Surrey's description of mock combat offers an explicit example: "On fomynge horse, with sordes and frendlye hertes / With chere as thoughe the one should overwhelme, / Where we have fought and chased oft with dartes."[49] The stark contrast of "sordes" and "frendlye" suggests the proximity of combat and camaraderie within their role-play, their antagonistic "chere" (Middle English, "countenance") confirming that the feigned pretense of mutual aggression is an integral part of their combative drama. And though the combat may be fictionalized, the rewards of athletic triumph inspire the genuine exchange of violent energies; this ambivalence is native to the ritual altogether, insofar as it serves as preparation for the bloody transactions of real combat in the future.

In the stanza devoted to hunting, we find a series of equally pregnant associations, latent with the material of envious rivalry:

> The wyld forest, the clothed holtes with grene,
> With raynes avald and swift ybrethed horse,
> With crye of houndes and mery blastes bitwen,
> Where we did chase the fearfull hart a force.[50]

[49] "So crewell prison," lines 14-16.

[50] Ibid., 29-32. *Holtes* here means *woods*, while *avald* indicates that the reins are *slackened* ("vail, *v.2*").

It is certainly true that such lines can be read in terms of eroticism: the classical exempla of Adonis and Hippolytus provide a model for associating the hunt with the repression and sublimation of sexual desire, and Wyatt's famed "Whoso List to Hunt" may have also offered Surrey an immediate precedent for the metaphor.[51] But more importantly, these lines depict the process through which the adolescent boys were socialized as members of the warring class: presumably accompanied by adult men, Surrey and Richmond here learned to generate and regulate the same violence that underpinned the aristocracy's crucial sociopolitical identity as an instrument of controlled force. Such depictions of the symbolic, regulated violence of adolescent bonding suggest the more naked hostility that is latent in Surrey's emotional response to Richmond's memory. And crucially for boys like Surrey and Richmond, jousting and hunting were not socially neutral acts: they were imbued with the dynamics of age, identity, and birthright. Accordingly, insofar as they activate the mechanism of social competition, they are also implicated in the ambivalent trajectory of identification and envy I have located elsewhere. Surrey both did and did not want to become one with his friend, just as he both did and did not want to overtake him symbolically: this tortured emotional state, I think, manifests itself remarkably in the quasi-aggression of Surrey's grieving memories.

THE PRACTICE OF JEALOUSY

Of course, aggression and rivalry in "So crewell prison" are not limited to such boyhood exercises. Though much time at Windsor was conducted under the sign of Mars, an important share was also governed by Venus, and the poem's wistful memories of the erotic hunt naturally compliment the boys' adventures in the woods and lists. To this end, it is important to compliment

[51] In the next chapter, I treat such hunting poems in more detail.

our discussion of envy by considering a distinct but intimately related phenomenon: the rivalrous dynamics of jealousy.

As is the case with envy, it is no easy task to arrive at a working definition of *jealousy*; though the emotion contains its own affective mechanism, in common speech *jealousy* routinely stands in for the affiliated *envy*. Because of this confusion, scholars have devoted no small time to parsing the two emotions, and both theoretical and empirical research suggests that each has a set of unique characteristics.[52] More precisely, envy and jealousy have something of an opposite valence: whereas the envier suffers on behalf of some current lack—the coveted advantage, just out of reach—the jealous subject cannot tolerate the threat to something he or she already possesses (or thinks to possess)—and the anticipation of its loss, whether reasonable or unreasonable, fuels the subsequent agitation. In most situations, the threat is occasioned by a specific rival; hence, jealousy is most often thought in terms of a three-party relationship, as in the familiar case of romantic jealousy.[53] Yet, despite these differences of orientation, envy and jealousy often co-occur (as is clear from ordinary experience), and their affective domains overlap. At the categorical level, envy and jealousy tend to prompt similar reactions: both can involve "some form of hostility (envy may produce resentment and rancor; jealousy may produce anger over betrayal), and both can involve some form of lowered self-esteem and sadness (envy because of inferiority and longing and jealousy because of rejection and loss)."[54] Though distinct, these emotions are clearly linked in our

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[52] On the distinction between envy and jealousy, see, for example Parrott and Smith, "Distinguishing the Experiences of Envy and Jealousy."

[53] The third party, however, may be entirely abstracted, as in the (somewhat obsolete, but fully comprehensible) construction "the miser is jealous of his money." See Purshouse, "Jealousy in Relation to Envy," p. 195.

[54] Parrott and Smith, "Distinguishing the Experiences of Envy and Jealousy," p. 907. See also Bernd H. Schmitt, "Social Comparison in Romantic Jealousy," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 14 (1988): 374-87.

common experience, and it's no surprise that both emerge in the affective subtext of "So crewell prison."

It's equally unsurprising that *jealousy*, like *envy*, was a quite flexible term in early modern English. Renaissance usage often entailed the basic configuration of three-party rivalry, as shown in this verse "description of Iealousie":

> It is the death of ioy, twixt man and wife,
> Where loue is too much loaden with mistrust:
> It makes the maide to feare the married life,
> Least firmest faith should fall to be vniust:
> It beats the braine and grindes the wit to dust,
> It makes the wise a foole, the wealthie poore,
> And her that wold kepe house, to ope the dore.[55]

Then, as now, jealousy was a common condition of the wedded life. A similar sentiment is repeated in an advice manual of 1540:

> Wedded persons may thus passe ouer theyr lyues quietly and without complaynynges, yf the husbande become deafe, and the wyfe blynde. Signifyenge, that womankynde is much subiecte to the sycknes of gelousie, wherof vndoubtedly springeth greate variaunce & playntes....[She'd thus avoid] the suspicion to be made Cokequen, yf she wanted her eye syghte.[56]

And I needn't spend more time showing that romantic jealousy was a vital concept in the early modern period: Shakespeare, after all, provided us with its most enduring epithet.

But in its less monstrous, less green-eyed form, the term *jealousy* also encompassed a broader register. Descended from the Greek *zelos,* jealousy in the Renaissance was intimately connected to the notion of *zeal*; as such, it too participated in a much larger semantic network, of contextually fluid association. Jealousy, like zeal, entails the intense activation of emotional energy—and like zeal, its ethical valence is shaped by the particular whims of the speaker. This ambivalence is well reflected in early modern usage. While Thomas Wilson, for example, defines

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[55] Nicholas Breton, *Pasquils Mistress* (London, 1600), sig. F4^{v}.

[56] Richard Taverner, *The Second Booke of the Garden of Wysedome* (London, 1542), pp. 4-4^{v}. "Cokequen" is a female cuckold ("cuckquean, *n.*").

jealousy in the sense of triangulated (romantic) rivalry—"Griefe, for suspition of dishonesty in married yoake-fellowes, Husbands or Wiues"—he also offers a positive sense of the term: "One which loueth thers truely, not for lucre and glory to him-selfe, but for the benefit of the persons loued....Heere Iealous is taken in good part."[57] Furthermore, jealousy (like envy) also had a close association with the act of emulation. Indeed, in ancient Greek, *zelos* often refers to honorable emulation, as in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: "Emulation [*zelos*], therefore is virtuous and characteristic of virtuous men, whereas envy [*phthonos*] is base and characteristic of base men"[58] In the early modern period, the amorphous boundary between these terms is illustrated splendidly by an annotation in the Geneva Bible, which describes the Apostles' persecutors as "ful of blinde zeale, emulation and ielousie."[59] As with envy, the experience of jealousy is varied, involving ambivalent feelings of rivalry, aggression, and emulation, often simultaneously.

In "So crewell prison," notions of jealousy offer a valuable guide for considering the specifically *eroticized* competition latent in the poem—that is, when a third party becomes implicated in Surrey and Richmond's combative play. Windsor's "ladyes bright of hewe" provide this source of libidinal competition for the boys, whose attempts at teenage love are often imbued with rivalrous energy.[60] This dynamic can be detected in the passage describing their love-struck banter:

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[57] Wilson, *A Christian Dictionarie,* pp. 244-45. Wilson also notes the theological context: "God [is] saide to bee Iealous, when the marriage betweene him and his Church, is violated and broken."

[58] Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II.x.11. For this passage and discussion, see Richard H. Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy*: *The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9-11* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), p. 40f185.

[59] Acts 5:17.

[60] Of course, we are here also squarely in the realm of homosociality, and a reading of the sequence can be informed by Eve Sedgwick's familiar notion that women, when objectified erotically, often serve "the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men." See her

The secret groves, which ofte we made resound
Of plesaunt playnt and of our ladyes prayes,
Recording soft what grace eche one had found,
What hope of spede, what dred of long delayes.[61]

Within the pastoral world of Surrey's idealized Windsor, such ostensibly erotic (and homoerotic) expression must also be read as contentious—the kind of rustic sparring Surrey may have encountered in his own reading of the pastoral mode, and that Spenser would go on to portray so notably in *The Shepheardes Calendar.* Though ostensibly good natured, such poetic contests serve as a further analogue to the physical rivalry of masculine play.

But more notably, Surrey himself reveals the thematic proximity of jealousy and eroticized rivalry in the stanza devoted to a tennis match with Richmond:

The palme playe, where, dispoyled for the game,
With dased eyes oft we by gleames of love
Have mist the ball and got sight of our dame
To bayte her eyes which kept the leddes above.[62]

In his memory of the disrupted game, Surrey recalls both the envious rivalry of physical competition and the jealous rivalry of erotic competition. On one hand, the tennis match is another example of direct engagement between Surrey and Richmond, an extension of the various war games described elsewhere in the poem. In this sense, vying for both skill and advantage entails envy and emulation: as Kenneth Burke (channeling George Herbert Mead) elegantly notes, "what we call 'competition' is better described as men's attempt to *out-imitate* one another."[63] Yet on the other hand, Surrey suggests that the true source of the boys' contention lies not in the action on the court, but in their battle to attract the female spectators: here, the three-term configuration of

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Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 26.

[61] "So crewell prison," lines 25-28.

[62] Ibid., lines 13-16.

[63] Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Motives* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950), p. 131. The italics are Burke's. See also *A&P*, p. 78.

jealousy rules the day, governing Surrey and Richmond's development as both aristocrats and as sexually mature men.

As a concrete site in which eroticism and rivalry converge, the tennis match of "So crewell prison" suggests the larger way in which the celebration of Richmond's life is fraught with impulses that are often competing; in Surrey's recollection, formative moments of both adolescent bonding and adolescent sexuality are framed within an oppositional context, bubbling with latent energy of both jealousy and envy. This emulative combat is a crucial counterweight to the more obvious dynamic of "So crewell prison," in which Surrey comes to identify with his lost companion: as Lines has demonstrated, the poem systematically "erases any distinction of identity between the two friends," while the increasingly intimate description of their shared bedchamber ("The voyd walles eke, that harbourd us eche….[w]herwith we past the winter nightes awaye") suggests the extent to which Surrey and his "noble fere" finally become indistinguishable.[64] Throughout the poem, Surrey works with one hand to efface the distinction between Howard and Tudor, even as he cannot help but affirm it with the other. Such confusion of intersubjective boundaries is a key dynamic of the rivalrous emotions, and it is one that ultimately underpins the poem's concluding movement.

FINDING GRIEF

We have seen how the bulk of "So crewell prison" is an architectural catalogue, in which the castle's various locales trigger memories from Surrey and Richmond's shared past. In the poem's conclusion, however, Surrey comments directly on his grief, seeking desperately to make sense of both Richmond's loss and his own imprisonment. With "sobbing sighes," Surrey rails against Windsor itself, asking for some account of his friend's absence:

> 'O place of blys! renewer of my woos!

[64] Lines, "Erotic Politics," p. 5; "So crewell prison," lines 33-40.

> Geve me accompt wher is my noble fere,
> Whome in thy walles thow didest eche night enclose,
> To other lief, but vnto me most dere.' [65]

Though consistent with the poem's larger mode of address—"So crewell prison" is, of course, an apostrophe—Surrey's accusation here begins a series of displacements and confusions that overwhelm the final lines. Unsurprisingly, Windsor provides no satisfactory answer:

> Eccho, alas! that dothe my sorowe rewe,
> Retournes therto a hollowe sound of playnt.[66]

This echo exemplifies the erosion of boundaries that has been steadily enacted by the poem; it is a ghostly utterance that both does and does not emanate from Surrey's own mouth. Insofar as it is an act of reflexive speech, Surrey is implicated in his own allegation: though he may charge Windsor with his sorrow, Windsor charges him right back. To compound the confusion a final degree, there is even a sense in which the speech belongs to *Richmond*, the figure who has from the elegy's opening moments haunted the castle.

We need not embrace a fully psychoanalytic reading of the poem to acknowledge the emotional displacement at play in these passages.[67] In the simplest terms, Surrey's fixation on Richmond's absence provides an attractive safeguard from the events that have resulted in his imprisonment: by immersing himself in the loss of his friend, Surrey sidesteps the need to confront his own erratic behavior. (He also avoids the unenviable task of condemning those responsible for his sentence, including King Henry.) In this sense, the intensity and quality of Surrey's grief suggest that his lamentation for Richmond is in many ways a displacement of the sorrow he feels for

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[65] "So crewell prison," lines 43; 45-48. *Lief* is an Old/Middle English word of intimacy: "beloved, a dear one; a friend, sweetheart, mistress; occas. a wife," etc. That the designation conveys both erotic and non-erotic content is suggestive in this context.

[66] Ibid., lines 49-50.

[67] If one were inclined to explore a more traditional psychoanalytic approach, Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia* has much to offer a reading of "So crewell prison."

himself: grief for the friend, in other words, is substituted for the narcissistic mourning of Surrey's own wretched state.[68]

Yet at the same time, when Surrey does explicitly address his own misfortunes, we may also detect some attendant aggression toward Richmond: the friend who, by virtue of his unexpected death, has abandoned the poet and condemned him to unhappiness. This sentiment emerges in the elegy's final lines, when Surrey finds means to express the hostility and resentment that lurks beneath his grief:

> Thus I, alone, where all my fredome grew,
> In pryson pyne with bondage and restraynt;
> And with remembraunce of the greater greif,
> To bannishe the lesse, I fynde my chief releif.[69]

I find it difficult to read these final lines without detecting some animosity toward the friend who has left the poet in his time of need. A logical extension of the poem's latent rivalry motif, this aggression is a counterpoint to the larger elegiac action—but, given the reality of Richmond's death, Surrey seems to feel no small guilt at his own ambivalence. The logical conclusion of rivalry is a fantasy of the other's destruction: it is this thought that Surrey cannot tolerate, and he must accordingly divert its attendant aggression towards himself and his own misfortune. Insofar as Surrey feels abandoned by Richmond, he develops an anger that must be subsequently repressed; insofar as he has *also* become identified with this lost friend, the anger directed outward must be also directed toward himself. This ambivalence forcefully emerges in the final couplet— in which, despite the ostensible agenda of the elegiac occasion, it is difficult to ultimately know what part of Surrey's grief is the *greater*.

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[68] R. Clifton Spargo notes that narcissism "is often the concealed content of manifestly excessive grief," and we may see underneath Surrey's emotional posture how "concern for the other" becomes in actuality "an only too articulate expression of self-concern"; see *The Ethics of Mourning: Grief and Responsibility in Elegiac Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), p. 22.

[69] "So crewell prison," lines 51-54.

The properties of the rivalrous emotions help account for the position in which "So crewell prison" leaves its grieving poet: as Horacio Etchegoyen and Clara R. Nemas put it, envy entails "the paradox that the same faculty that allows [the envier] to appreciate the good qualities of the object is at the same time the source of unbearable pain."[70] In this view, envy is grounded upon "an unconscious projective identification with the envied person, who represents the image of whom the envying person would want to be in the ideal sense…[but] because feelings of inferiority partly motivate such identification, this idealization is blended with resentment and derogation."[71] Surrey and Richmond certainly enjoyed a close relation, as symbolic brothers of the highest social order—but as experience often confirms, we are most quick to envy "those who are close to us in terms of time, space, age and reputation."[72] This feature of social life was not obscure to Renaissance thinkers:

> Lastly, near kinsfolks, and fellows in office, and those that have been bred together, are more apt to envy their equals when they are raised. For it doth upbraid unto them their own fortunes, and pointeth at them, and cometh oftener into their remembrance, and incurreth likewise more into the note of others; and envy ever redoubleth from speech and fame.[73]

Such proximity, and the co-mingling of social identities it entails, ultimately confound Surrey's attempt to console himself with his verse, insofar as he finds it impossible to clearly delineate the object of his grief.

Despite its resounding success as a poetic performance, "So crewell prison" thus fails as a tool of grief. If, as Peter Sacks has argued, the conventional elegy guides its speaker through the

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[70] Horacio Etchegoyen and Clara R Nemas, "Salieri's Dilemma: A Counterpoint Between Envy and Appreciation," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 84 (2003): 45.

[71] Richard H. Smith and Sung Hee Kim, "Comprehending Envy," *Psychological Bulletin* 133 (2007): 56.

[72] Miceli and Castelfranchi, "The Envious Mind," p. 453.

[73] Francis Bacon, "Of Envy," in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, 15 vols. (London, 1857-74), 6:394. For discussion of this passage, see *A&P*, p. 174.

"work of mourning," then Surrey's poem to Richmond must be recognized for the way it rejects consolation: there is no vision of renewal, no sublimation of the lost object, no affirmation of the speaker's willingness to endure.[74] In this sense, the poem has surprising affinities with the modern elegy, which has been characterized by a tendency toward "unresolved, violent, and ambivalent" forms of mourning.[75] Though "So crewell prison" can express, it cannot finally escape the act of memory that entwines Surrey's present fate with the idealized vision of his friend. At the poem's end, Surrey is left with only the choice between two kinds of grief—and though the lesser may be banished, it is only by reference to the larger shadow that still hangs over both Windsor and the speaker.

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"Those are most subject to envy," Francis Bacon reflects, who "carry the greatness of their fortunes in an insolent and proud manner."[76] It should come as no surprise that in 1539, just three years after the Duke of Richmond's death, the twenty-two year old Earl of Surrey was famously described as "the most folish prowde boye that ys in England."[77]

"So crewell prison," I have tried to show in this chapter, is a profoundly angry poem: the troubled comparisons to Troy, the simmering displays of adolescent aggression, and the severity of the poet's melancholy suggest a well of emotional energy too often ignored by scholars. It is also, however, a poem of remarkable pathos, nostalgia, and eroticism, and the account presented in my reading is not intended to erode the typical focus of recent criticism on the poem. Rather, it has

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[74] See Peter M. Sacks, *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

[75] Jahan Ramazani, *Poetry of Mourning: The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 4.

[76] Bacon, "Of Envy," in *Works*, 6:395.

[77] "Transcript of an Original Manuscript, Containing a Memorial from George Constantyne to Thomas Lord Cromwell,"*Archaeologia* 23 (1831): 62.

aimed to provide an alternate frame in which to consider such familiar concerns as rivalry and homoeroticism—a frame that more broadly accounts for the elegy's complex psychodynamics and the torturous sociopolitical context in which it was composed. The poem registers the concurrent loss of an ideal companion, of a pastoral youth, of face at court, of a promised future: it accordingly reflects, in its emotional tenor, the profound entanglement of tenderness, melancholy, and aggression. As a core emotional response of courtly combat, envy installs the affective network through which these varied feelings flow.

Chapter 3: The Emotional Practice of *Frustration*: Leicester, Sidney, and the 1570s

In the final movement of Book V of *The Faerie Queene*, Artegall, the knight of justice—who, aided by the war-machine Talus, had already extended his cold and brutal mandate to the far reaches of Faerie Land—liberates the island commonwealth of fair Irena from the arch-tyrant Grantorto, in an episode refracting the cankered plight of historical Ireland, a long-sucking wound in the side of Elizabethan political culture. Having toppled the head of the insurgency, Artegell sets out to cleanse the isle of Grantorto's stain, hunting down rebels and collaborators while working to restore the authority of its rightful sovereign. Yet before Artegall could fully "reforme that ragged common-weale," he finds himself recalled to Faerie Court, his virtuous tasks obscured at home by the shade of "enuies cloud."[1] In answering the summons, he is similarly beset by the dual hags *Enuie* and *Detraction*—who, with their monstrous pet the *Blatant beast*, do "barke and bay / With bitter rage and fell contention," befouling the honorable knight with words "most shamefull, most vnrighteous, most vntrew."[2] In the previous chapter, we have seen the power of envy in the courtly sphere, and Artegall proves no match for the barbs and bites of corridor combat: he must yield the stage to Calidore, a knight whose courtly arsenal will, in the poem's final proper book, prove at least a bit more apt than sword or flail. Bruised and battered from his long endeavors, and smarting still from slander's sting, Artegall trudges forth to Eliza's court, "returning yet halfe sad."[3]

This is a hardly notable end, for a rather notable knight, and it's easy to appreciate why his return is a doleful one. But why, we may stop and wonder, does the poem describe this disgraced

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[1] Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A.C. Hamilton *et al.*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 2006), V.xii.26.4; 27.7.

[2] Ibid., V.xii.41.2-3; 42.2.

[3] Ibid., VI.i.4.4.

hero as *half* sad? Why is Artegall's sadness only partial, and what comprises this alternate, conflicting response? What does this emotional state tell us about Artegall, and what does it reveal more generally about the Elizabethan courtly experience?

This chapter is an attempt to imagine what these mixed feelings might be, and how they might emerge from the particular nature of Artegall's career of royal service. My focus, however, lies not with Artegall's struggles in the fictive court of faerie, but rather with those of the courtly makers themselves: a group of men also tasked with negotiating the emotional corridors of a cutthroat court, and whose varied fortune as servants to Queen Elizabeth would find complex expression in figures like Spenser's knight of justice. In my analysis, this contested affective terrain is situated in an equally contested social context—the courtly experience of the late 1570s, a period crucial in shaping the climate of Elizabeth's subsequent rule. My interest in this chapter lies with two of the key players on this stage: Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (the famed courtly favorite) and his nephew-heir Sir Philip Sidney (the famed courtly poet).

The most notable courtier of the Elizabethan period, Leicester was the central node of a vast network of courtly patronage and influence; this amorphous collective, which I will (informally) refer to throughout as the Leicester/Sidney party, found common ground in a series of broad ideological commitments, such as an interventionist outlook on the affairs of Europe and a general inclination to the reformed faith. Yet despite Leicester's unequalled mastery of the courtly dance, the actualities of Elizabethan policy routinely brought disappointment and frustration to those of his political persuasion—and despite their overriding personal loyalty to the queen, men like Leicester and Sidney had to brave the persistent sting of waylaid plans, neglected proposals, and personal slights.[4] To begin charting the affective consequence of this position, I will in this chapter

[4] On Leicester's life, see, for example, Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) and Adams's *DNB* entry; on

consider how the Leicester/Sidney party exhibits an emotional practice of courtly *frustration*: the affective response occasioned by the blockage, deferment, or disruption of one's political goals, and (as in the case of Artegall) by the failure to have one's political value actualized and appreciated within the court's social world.[5]

It is not pleasant to have one's ambitions thwarted—especially, I imagine, when those ambitions were weighed on a geopolitical (and even cosmic) scale. But there is also, I argue in this chapter, a silver lining to this affective cloud of courtly frustration. Such ostensible failures, I will try to show, also have a shadow life as *productive* social moments, generating new modes of personal identity and new forms of political collectivity: a conciliatory affect comprising the other halfe of Artegall's sadness. Rejection, I suggest, could be powerfully constitutive to Elizabethan courtiers like Leicester and Sidney, insofar as it sanctions a reciprocal ethos of protest and opposition: an ostensible failure, when salvaged and repackaged as heroic or ennobling, can become a striking announcement of one's refusal to be fully integrated into the symbolic universe of Elizabeth's court, and of one's willingness to break script from its enabling fictions. But what starts as a posture of individual bravado (or heroism, or narcissism, or recklessness) is soon transformed, through the channels of performance, to an intersubjective act: by broadcasting his own alienation, the courtier offers an alliance to the similarly minded, inviting them to join him in an alternate social order. This community of disaffection, galvanized by a concurrent set of political and social goals—and by the ongoing opposition to the goals—assumes the role of a courtly subculture, founded and sustained by the affinity of negative affect.

Sidney, see Malcolm William Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (New York: Octagon Books, 1967); Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney, Courtier Poet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); and Alan Stewart, *Philip Sidney: A Double Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000).

[5] The high stakes of courtly interaction were especially primed to generate frustrated and disappointed courtiers. In fact, Frank Whigham notes that a "central employment of the tropes of courtesy was to relieve these strains, by postponing, accounting for, or mystifying the various levels of personal failure" (*A&P,* p. 21).

In the uncertain courtly climate of the late 1570s, such a recuperative model of frustration was particularly valuable for Leicester and Sidney; it finds particular expression, I suggest, in the pageantry that they sponsored in this period. In the second half of the decade, the Leicester/Sidney party treated Elizabeth to an elaborate series of multimedia events—such as the Queen's progresses to Kenilworth and Woodstock, and Sidney's pageant *The Lady of May*—in which all manner of suits, appeals, and advertisements were couched in the splendor and spectacle of nominal royal delight. But despite their primary (and genuine) commitment to the task of royal ingratiation, these literary performances, I will argue, nonetheless seem to anticipate and account for the possibility of their own failure. Leicester and his proxies embed in these texts certain discursive contingency plans, in which spoiled or frustrated attempts at flattery and insinuation might be retroactively claimed as a symbolic, collective victory by the ostensibly slighted party. As we will see, and as Leicester and Sidney were well aware, even the stock tropes of royal performance housed a latent source of entropic and oppositional energy, waiting to redeem a would-be failure. In the 1570s, when Elizabeth's grip on England's symbolic and political order was not yet permanent, it was a particularly valuable time to squeeze royal lemons into courtly lemonade.

WHY SO FRUSTRATED?

To understand the precise manifestation of courtly frustration in the 1570s, we must first understand its cause. For the Leicester/Sidney circle, it originated from two primary nodes.

The first, of a more restricted character, emerged from Leicester's long simmering ambition to secure Elizabeth's hand in marriage—an extended affair that had lingered, albeit faintly, for some

two decades.[6] Elizabeth had been crowned only for months when she developed her intense affection for the young Robert Dudley; as Master of the Horse, he enjoyed close and frequent access to the new queen, and within less than a year their brazen intimacy was the subject of rumor and innuendo on both sides of the channel. Perceptions worsened in September 1560, when Leicester's wife Amy Robsart was found dead of a broken neck, apparently after "falling downe a paier of stayres."[7] Though cleared of wrongdoing by the coroner's inquest, Leicester was plagued for decades by rumors of a domestic conspiracy—a theory infamously expounded in the so-called *Leicester's Commonwealth* (1584), a Catholic polemic that has been called "the most notorious of Elizabethan political libels."[8] (Skeptics noted that the stairwell "by reporte was but eight steppes"—a seemingly unlikely setting for such a grave accident.)[9] Yet despite this bad publicity, Elizabeth wavered little in her affection for Leciester, and within only weeks reports circulated that "hyr Hygness shoolde marry hym" before too long.[10]

There was no doubt that England longed for a royal wedding; in the first Parliament of the reign (only weeks after her coronation), the queen was petitioned with a formal request to find the realm a suitable king, in whom its future hopes might be secured. But Elizabeth could not, as unvalued persons do, carve this matter for herself—and whatever the inclinations of her heart, Dudley was not an especially apt choice for such a royal match. The queen's young court, already swirling with envy and resentment at his being favored, would hardly be settled by such a choice,

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[6] For an analysis of Elizabeth's marriage suits, see Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London: Routledge, 1996), which informs what follows.

[7] "A 'Journall' of Matters of State Happened from Time to Time," ed. Simon Adams *et al*., in *Religion, Politics, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England*, ed. Ian W. Archer *et al.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 66.

[8] Adams, *Leicester and the Court,* p. 47.

[9] "A 'Journall,'" p. 66.

[10] *A Collection of State Papers: Relating to Affairs In the Reigns of King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth: From the Year 1542 to 1570*, ed. Samuel Haynes (London, 1740), p. 364.

and by embracing her own subject (a fraternization usually thought beneath a prince's dignity), Elizabeth equally threatened to tarnish her already spotted reputation abroad, all the while foreclosing the possibilities of matrimonial diplomacy. Throughout 1561, Dudley scrambled to make himself a more appealing candidate, even entreating the Spanish powers to agitate on his behalf—but the support he had secured was not enough to sustain him in the coming months. By 1563, Susan Doran argues, Elizabeth was left with "apparently little desire and certainly no intention of taking Dudley as her husband."[11] The moment had passed for Dudley, who would never again be a (at least politically speaking) plausible romantic contender for the queen; "nunca la Reina se determinará en casare conmigo," a Spanish ambassador reported him to say, "porque tiene determinacion de casare con algun gran Príncipe."[12] In the years to come, Dudley (now ennobled) would devote no small energy to undercutting, or outright sabotaging, the foreign suitors that vied for Elizabeth's hand—and while this opposition cannot be attributed merely to spite, there is nonetheless no small hint of cumulative frustration in the affective cloud surrounding it. Although Elizabeth would never marry Leicester or *algun gran Príncipe*, there were certainly times when the latter seemed close to happening: especially, as I will touch upon later, in the final years of the 1570s. Leicester's marriage suit was an early casualty of Elizabeth's reign, but proved remarkably resilient in clinging onto life. The frustration of this desire, I will show, is reimagined and rechanneled in the courtly performances that he sponsored.

The second cause of agitation in the 1570s—more immediate, more intense, and more dispersed among Leicester's party—concerned the ongoing religious strife that ravaged the nations of Europe, and the extent to which England should and could enter the fray. In the balance was the

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[11] Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, p. 64.

[12] "The queen will never be persuaded to marry me, because she is determined to marry some great Prince" [my translation]. *Colección de Documentos Inéditos Para la Historia de España*, ed. Real Academia de la Historia, 112 vols. (Madrid, 1842-95), 89:116.

fate of Christendom. Leicester, Sidney, and a group of similarly minded men at court (including Secretary of State Francis Walsingham and William Davison, perennial English ambassador in the Low Countries) persistently pushed for direct English military intervention in the late 1570s; their overriding agenda concerned the on-going revolt in the Netherlands, and how England might best help this Dutch resistance overthrow the yoke of Spanish tyranny. Leicester envisioned himself commanding an army, with Sidney at his side, to overthrow the forces of continental papistry—and on many occasions during this period, he was assured by Elizabeth that his plan would be enacted. (He went so far, after one such promise, as to begin purchasing a personal suit of armor.)[13] Yet, as so often was the case with Elizabeth, such plans changed on an apparent whim, and in the 1570s both Leicester and Sidney were consistently frustrated in these long promised ambitions. Their fantasies would not be realized for nearly a decade, in the final years of both their lives.

Some context is necessary. In the second half of the 1560s, inhabitants of the so-called Low Countries — a complex patchwork of geopolitically-related though distinct provinces, corresponding largely to the modern nations of Belgium, Luxemberg, and the Netherlands — took up arms against their collective Hapsberg sovereign, in attempt to liberate themselves from King Philip II and escape the flames of his inquisitors.[14] It was no easy thing to rule the Low Countries, an amorphous political conglomeration that boasted its own hereditary aristocracy, and Philip II (who was not, like his father, born in the Provinces) was willing to make the necessary concessions, granting members of the Dutch nobility a nominal stake in their own governance.[15] On matters of

[13] TNA, SP 83/3, fol. 39.

[14] On the Dutch revolt, see Charles Wilson, *Queen Elizabeth and the Revolt of The Netherlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970); Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and Foreign Policy, 1558-1603* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Jonathan Irvine Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); and, more generally, the discussion in Anne Somerset, *Elizabeth I* (London: Phoenix Giant, 1991).

[15] The Dutch Council of State was an advisory body that reported to Margaret of Parma, then-Spanish governor (and sister to King Philip).

religion, however, Philip would not budge, and his refusal to accommodate the growing pockets of Calvinism in his territories—combined with more endemic frustrations over taxation and centralization efforts—sparked outbursts of iconoclastic resistance in 1566.[16] Yet this initial push would meet a hasty end: the Calvinist forces of William (the Silent) of Orange, the charismatic rebel-prince whose name would become synonymous with the struggle for Dutch independence, were no match for the counter-insurgency of the Duke of Alba, whose Spanish forces restored a brutal order to the land and secured the governorship for their general. With Philip's blessing, Alba installed a blood tribunal to exterminate whatever trace of resistance might be uncovered, and in the wake of his entry into the Provinces, over 60,000 people are said to have fled the region.[17] Orange, however, would not be deterred, and the rebellion simmered over the next decade, variously engaging the Spanish with waves of violence and uneasy truces.

For Leicester and his fellow reformers, the situation in the Netherlands was a perfect storm of personal motivators, sacred and profane: delivering the Dutch their independence would both liberate a valuable economic center from French and Spanish control and strike a blow at the heart of continental papistry. A letter to Walsingham of 1571 reveals the intensity of Leicester's commitment to immediate intervention on the Dutch behalf:

> I think her Majestie shall be advised not to lose all these good advantages offered her, specially when they tend both to the setting up of Gods true Religion, and establishing of her own surety, with augmentation of her Crown. For my part, I never found cause since her Reign, that moveth me more to further it; and be you assured, I will do all that is possible that somewhat may come thereof.[18]

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[16] This, despite the fact that countless Dutch, comprising the majority of southern provinces, favored both Catholicism and reconciliation with Spain.

[17] Installed in September 1567, this *Conseil des Troubles* (or *Conseil de Sang*) would prove "highly effective" in its charge: "some 8950 persons, from all levels of society, were investigated and sentenced for treason or heresy, or both, more than one thousand being executed" (Israel, *The Dutch Republic,* pp. 156-57).

[18] *The Complet Ambassador,* ed. Dudley Diggs (London, 1655), p. 129. The "augmentation" (as I take it) refers to the economic value of asserting control of the region.

But while no friend of the papal authority—whose bull of excommunication had, only a year earlier, entailed a virtual contract on her life—the queen was even more loath to sponsor insurrection against an anointed king; this was especially true after her own harrowing experience in the Northern Rebellion of 1569.[19] And though the infamous massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572 (witnessed firsthand by Sidney and Walsingham) would fortify the resolve of England's interventionist reformers, it ultimately served to mend relations England and Spain, who formalized their amity with the Treaty of Bristol in 1574. In the years that followed, Leicester and his allies on the council continue to agitate for intervention, with little success.

The tide seemed to turn in the fall of 1576, when a swarm of mutinous Spanish troops "putt to sacke" the city of Antwerp, unleashing "a petyffull slavghter & a mysarable spoyle" on the unfortunate citizens.[20] Like the sack of Rome (1527) and the Massacre (1572), the siege of Antwerp (or "The Spanish Fury") would become another iconic moment in the sixteenth century's long history of religious violence. The galvanized Dutch States (often fractured by matters of policy and religion) formed a united coalition of resistance, and Queen Elizabeth, now receptive to her council's pleas, tentatively authorized financial and military support to the cause.[21] But despite the waves of optimism that swept through the Leicester party, their hopes would prove agonizingly

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[19] In 1569, a handful of Catholic noblemen from the northern counties unsuccessfully rose against Elizabeth, with hopes of installing Mary, Queen of Scots on the English throne.

[20] TNA, SP 70/140, fol. 189.

[21] The soldier-poet George Gascoigne—a Leicester associate, we will see—witnessed the carnage first hand: "I refrayne to rehearce the heapes of deade Carcases whiche laye at euery Trench where they entred: the thicknesse whereof, did in many places exceede the height of a man... I list not to recken the infinite nombers of poore Almains, who lay burned in their armour: som the entrailes skorched out, & all the rest of the body free, some their head and shoulders burnt of: so that you might looke down into the bulk & brest and there take an Anatomy of the secrets of nature. Some standing vppon their waste, being burnte of by the thighes: & some no more but the very toppe of the brain taken of with fyre, whiles the rest of the body dyd abide vnspeakable tormentes. I set not downe the ougly & filthy polluting of euery streete with the gore and carcases of men and horses. See *The Spoyle of Antwerpe, Faithfully Reported, by a True Englishman, who was Present at the Same* (London, 1576), sig. BVIII^{v}-Ci. The event also inspired Thomas Lodge's jeremiad-drama *A Larum for London* (pub. 1602).

hollow: the two years that followed were plagued with difficulties and deferrals, and Leicester could do little but wait, as did the many on the continent who sought his coming, for a command that would not materialize. The decision was finalized in March 1578, when Elizabeth reached a compromise: rather than deploying the promised English forces, which threatened to antagonize Spain and France, she would instead sponsor the German reformer Count Casimir, whose mercenary army would protect the interests of the Dutch States. After months of negotiations and assurances, the sudden shift in policy—from direct military intervention (through the States themselves) to indirect financial intervention (through the proxy Casimir)—was a devastating disappointment to the gung-ho counselors; despite all assurances, Leicester and Sidney would not see action in the Low Countries until 1585.

To understand the quality of this frustration, it is necessary to recognize the vast energies (social, psychic, and intellectual) that Leicester had invested in his promised generalship. In the second half of the 1570s, correspondence on both sides of the channel buzzed with anticipation of the earl and his forces—a collective excitement that made Elizabeth's eventual decision devastating. "My Lord of Leicester," it was first reported in the English diplomatic community, "is the moste deseirowse to goe the chiefe of this Iorney *tha*t ever yowe herd of, and dothe labor *tha*t bothe by his owen policy, and by the favor of all his freind*es.*"[22] This deployment seemed inevitable—and "yf ther be cayse to send ayd," Leicester himself would later ensure, "her ma*jest*ie doth promys my self shale have the Chardge."[23] According to one report, in fact, the earl had made up his mind before Elizabeth:

> My Lord of Leicester commeth over generall of all the men w*hi*ch her m*ajes*tie shall send in the lowe Countries. This is his full determynation, but yet vnknowen vnto

[22] TNA, SP 15/25, fol. 53.

[23] TNA, SP 83/3, fol. 39^{v}.

> her highnes, nether shall she be acquainted w*i*th it, vntill she be fully resolued to send.[24]

In this conviction, Leicester was encouraged by a network of hopefuls on the continent—including, he was told, the Prince of Orange himself, who "dailye insist vppo*n* the callinge ouer of yo*u*r L*ordshi*p, aswell to satisfie his longinge desyre to see and hono*u*r youe in p*er*son, as for the co*m*mon wealhes sake, w*hi*ch he is owt of dowbt shalbe singularlye relieued by your tra*n*sportation."[25] As Leicester was reminded, he was essential to the Dutch cause, both as a political supporter and as a general:

> I fynd the Prince the most desyrous man in the worlde of yo*u*r L*ordshi*ps co*m*minge ouer, and yt ys the strenge he daylye harpes on, but as one carefull, I thinke, aboue all men, of yo*u*r Ho*nors* welfare. he hath considered and discoursed w*i*th me at large of all the difficulties, one of the greatest whereof might be yo*u*r longe absence from court, w*hi*ch might p*er*happes breede as greate preiudice one waye as proffit another, knowinge how by yo*u*r credytt and p*re*sence there, all their causes haue the better speede and successe.[26]

And this fondness, in fact, extended to those of his party: when discussing with Orange "p*er*sons to supplye y*ou*r L*ordshi*ps room," the English ambassador William Davison made the welcome suggestion of "my good L*ord* of Warwick, yo*u*r L*ordshi*ps brother, or, if that might not be, M*aste*r Phillip Sidney, both men so agreable to his Excellencie, as in a world I could not haue made a choyce to his better co*n*tentment, for the honorable opinion he hath both of the one and other."[27]

Because of this intense expectation, Elizabeth's sudden change of policy in March 1578 was crushing. Only days later, Leicester reveals his despair in a heart-wrenching letter to Davison:

> I know you thinke much in me *th*at I have wrytten so syldome to you of late, but truly I have byn so trowbled to se *th*e alterac*i*ons of o*u*r resolucions as I nether had mynd to wryte, or doe any thing.[28]

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[24] TNA, SP 15/25, fol. 53.

[25] TNA, SP 83/3, fol. 5.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] TNA, SP 83/5, fols. 69-69^{v}, for this and the following quotations in this paragraph.

For Leicester, it was impossible not to take the news as a personal failing, and thus as an implicit insult to his honor:

> And ageyn, for my owne p*ar*te, hit can not but greve me, putting my self so farr forward as I dyd, & the matter in so great shewe of my going as yt was, to imagyn what want may be thought in me *tha*t so great a chaunge ys happened, spetyally being a mynister, as I have been, in *th*e cause, & holding *th*e place I doe. But I take god to record I have donne my best & vtter most to sett hit forward as I thought hit most safe & honorable for her ma*jest*ie, and he know*e*th best also how lytle I sowght therin any Iote of my wone p*ar*tyculer.

In language bordering on apocalyptic, Leicester's anxiety for the realm's safety has a clear theological bent, a feature which suggests the extent to which his intervention was framed as a divine mandate:

> Well I can say no more, but I pray God we be all as we ought and that her ma*jest*ie & this Realme fynd no dangerous lacke of this alterac*i*on….I had rather a 1,000 tymes hassard my lyffe in seking to preuent so great daungers as everye way ar lyke to happen to vs & o*u*r frend*es*, than lyve in the greatest fellycyty or securytye for my uone p*er*sonne *tha*t may be wyshed. but o*u*r good god hath found vs, I fear, to vnworthie of long*e*r contynu*n*nce of his former blessinges. hit ys he alone nowe *tha*t can help vs, I meane myraculously, seing the apparaunt ordinary courses ar so overslipt.

But perhaps most of all, Leicester could not but feel that he had failed Orange personally:

> I have almost nether face, nor counten*a*nce to wryte to *th*e prince, his expectac*i*on being so greatly deceaued, but I hope you wyll lett him faythfully knowe how yt greveth me, & *tha*t he wyll think I am a subiect & seru*a*nt, but *tha*t loveth him as much as any ma*n*n *tha*t lyveth, who soever he be, and wysheth his prosperytye as greatly, and so shuld he have found, yf god had byn pleasyd *tha*t I had come this voyage or *tha*t yet hit may please him *tha*t so hit may fall out hearafter.

For those of Leicester's party, this was all a bitter pill to swallow. After years of hopeful expectation, they had missed their chance to seize the reins of Christendom—and this failure, combined with that of Leicester's marriage suit, would greatly shape their affective world in the immediate future.

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In the late 1570s a cluster of very powerful men at court were bound by a mutual dissatisfaction with the Queen's proceedings, which often seemed overtly contemptuous of her advisors' counsel, her realm's well-being, and her own personal safety at large. When exploring the emotional resonance of this configuration, one fact is paramount: by frustrating the aims of men like Leicester and Sidney, Elizabeth inflicted no small violence on their very identity as English subjects. For a senior peer like Leicester, the queen's policy of deferment could be experienced as a direct o*ntological* injury; by denying Leicester his army, she barred him from actualizing the active political selfhood for which he was, according to the culture's logic, natively designed.[29] Sidney shared with his uncle this neo-chivalric outlook on the nature of service and autonomy—but like Surrey, with whom he shared a general affective disposition, Sidney would never fulfill the promise of his upbringing, and his courtly career was even more plagued with frustrations and disappointments.[30] Though Steven May has demonstrated that Queen Elizabeth's alleged "neglect" of Sidney has been grossly inflated by the scholarly tradition, at issue here is not whether or not Sidney was cruelly clipped by an ungracious queen—but rather that he *felt* this to be the case, and that his affective life was shaped accordingly.[31] This political frustration threatened to be emotionally crippling, and men like Leicester and Sidney necessarily developed strategies to manage it.

One such technique, I think, can be detected in the literary performances with which they were associated. To repair the psychic wounds of political frustration and disappointment, those of the Leicester/Sidney party drew collective strength from a series of textual and performative moments designed to reassert their own autonomy, by announcing themselves incompatible with

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[29] On courtly ontology, see *A&P,* Chap. 2.

[30] On the neo-chivalric impulse in Sidney and his associates, see *SPC*, p. 387ff.

[31] Steven May, "Sir Philip Sidney and Queen Elizabeth," *English Manuscript Studies*, *1100-1700* 2 (1990): 257-68. For a classic study of Sidney's disappointments, see F.J. Levy, "Philip Sidney Reconsidered," *ELR* 2 (1972): 5-18.

the larger symbolic matrix that governed Elizabethan monarchal representation. Such moments are not simply "subversive," in the sense of suggesting a challenge to the dominant discourse; rather they exist to publicize a challenge that has *already* taken place, and to remind the royal powers of just who are the challengers.[32] The mode is less immediately combative than it is confessional—though the confession, to be sure, is of the malcontent's willingness (and happiness) to engage in courtly combat.[33] For the disaffected courtier, I suggest, such disruption could generate a heroic moment of existential autonomy—an assertion of wicked will that demonstrates, like the example of Camus's Sisyphus, that "there is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn."[34] Leicester and Sidney's entertainments have been primed to produce such moments. Even as they celebrate Elizabeth's glory—which is, to be clear, their primary function—they nonetheless have been armed with a series of embedded countermeasures: textual features that might be activated at a moment's notice, to unleash an unsuspecting attack, or to cloak a hasty retreat. A history of failure sows anticipation of a failing future—a crippling truth, unless that possibility is coopted in advance.

After thirty years of New Historicist scholarship, it is no surprise to find that courtiers and their proxies found means to thread strands of discontent and opposition within the larger, conventional framework of monarchal celebration.[35] But my point is not to observe that the pageants of the 1570s contained moments of subversion (few texts don't), but rather to emphasize how these texts anticipate their own failing, and how these failures can engender productive forms

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[32] There is perhaps an analogy here to the criminal who takes pleasure in taunting police.

[33] The early modern discourse of treason famously conceptualizes the danger of "compassing and imaging" injury to the commonweal; my model of frustration, similarly, creates textual moments in which the courtier flagrantly announces that he is "compassing and imaging" the terms of his own disaffection.

[34] Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus, and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), p. 121.

[35] For discussion of such New Historicist treatments of courtly protest, see below.

of collective identification. My thinking in this regard resembles what is generally called "the anti-social thesis" in queer studies: the notion that, in response to a social order that has already cast them as unwanted and abject, queer subjects might be empowered by "accepting and even embracing" this "ascription of negativity to the queer," as means of accessing an alternate, collective subject position. While the social and political stakes, of course, couldn't be more incongruous, I do think that a similar affective mechanism underwrites anti-court sentiment in the early Elizabethan context. Such a strategic display of disaffection is doubly fortifying to the courtier's sense of personal autonomy: it frees him from the burden of masking negative affect (and thus diverting the costly "emotional work" of such dissimulation) and flaunts, through a naked breach of decorum, that his force of will is not such that will be deterred by fear of reprisal.[36] When this technique is deployed across a network of discontent (such as that formed by Leicester, Sidney, and the similarly minded) the result is to forge an alternate model of community—an oppositional anti-court, defined by its attempt to refashion, through an act of affective jiu-jitsu, negative social meaning into the stuff of identity confirmation and alternative political action.

INTO THE WILD

In the middle of May 1578, when riding through the woods of Leicester's estate at Wanstead, Queen Elizabeth found herself suddenly starring in Philip Sidney's earliest surviving literary composition. During her regular summer "progresses"—in which the royal court, fully mobilized, would tear its way through the houses and manors of its nobility—Elizabeth was routinely entertained by elaborate spectacles and performances; in this particular pageant, known now as *The Lady of May*, Sidney had cast the queen as mediator in a rustic debate that had

[36] On "emotional work," see Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

spontaneously erupted before her.[37] A country lass, lately on the cusp of "that notable matter" of matrimony, finds herself equally inclined to the suits of Espilus—a wealthy shepherd, offering a life of ease and comfort—and Therion—a lusty forester, promising a life of activity and exhilaration. As the drama unfolds, both sides debate the merits of the lovers and their professions, before the queen is finally called upon to adjudicate.[38]

Given his virile, vital associations with the *vita activia*, modern readers have tended to agree that Therion is *some* kind of literary figuration of the Sidney/Leicester agenda—and this is with good reason, as we will see.[39] Yet at the same time, if Sidney wanted to assure a victory for the forester, there are a few details he perhaps might have spared: when not off "stealing me venison out of these forests," the lady admits, Therion often "grows to such rages, that sometimes he strikes me, sometimes he rails at me."[40] This rather naked assertion certainly troubles Therion's representational status, and is enough for some to disqualify any association with Sidney altogether: "on a literal level," wonders his biographer Katherine Duncan-Jones, "could he have expected the Queen to reward a violent poacher?"[41]

My analysis of *The Lady of May* occurs in the conclusion of this chapter. Yet Duncan-Jones's reasonable question demands an answer now, and the thrust of it has implications for a more general reading of the Leicester/Sidney party's literary ethos—because yes, she's fundamentally right, it does seem unlikely that Sidney would expect the queen to unequivocally reward such renegade behavior. But the very notion, as Duncan-Jones frames it, is premised on the assumption that Sidney's absolute and overriding interest *was* securing the reward for his proxy—and this

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[37] *The Lady of May* citations are taken from Philip Sidney, *Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones and J. A. van Dorsten (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1973).

[38] Ibid., p. 21, line 15.

[39] This critical tradition is discussed below.

[40] Ibid., p. 25, lines 3-6.

[41] Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet*, p. 149.

supposition (and the spirit that animates it) risks limiting our understanding of courtly dynamics, especially as they inflect and are inflected by the courtier's subjective experience. There were very good affective reasons why a frustrated courtier might construe himself so unsuitably, however imprudent as a matter of immediate policy.[42]

And indeed, there were good reasons why Sidney and Leicester might want to align themselves specifically with the forester Therion, the figure whose native domain was the depths of the wild, liberated from the softening touch of art and culture, and from the order and degree of the monarch's court. By virtue of his standing, the average Elizabethan aristocrat had a functional relationship with the natural world: nobles often joined the Queen in her favorite pastime of hunting, and their newly built estates, elaborately stylized with gardens, parks, and other artificial landscapes, drew much of their significance via contrast with the surrounding woodland. Yet there was also a more substantial way that England's wild proved a site of identity management for Elizabeth's nobility. Concepts of the wild were a vital counterbalance in the long development of European courtesy, as a site of contestatory energy that threatened to disrupt the symbolic order of civil discourse, and that threatened to disrupt the principles of governance itself.[43]

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[42] Indeed, rationality is the criteria through which Duncan-Jones more broadly suggests that *The Lady of May* is most probably misread as a reflection of Elizabethan policy; "in broad terms," she suggests, "it seems unlikely that Sidney would be so rash as to use his uncle's public entertainment of the Queen to force a statement from her on such grave matters" (*Courtier Poet*, p. 149). Yet this approach has difficulty honoring what we know to be a bedrock fact of Sidney's personal and political life: his short career was full of decisions that, in retrospect, seem rash. I am thus in full agreement with the position of Derek B. Alwes, who suggests that the fullest readings of the shepherd knight are those open to "retrieving (or at least conceiving of) a Sidney both capable of and motivated to pursue a tactless and indeed dangerous challenge to his monarch's authority." See *Sons and Authors in Elizabethan England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), p. 72.

[43] Similarly, Frederick Jackson Turner famously argues that concepts of the wild guided the development of the American psyche; see *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (New York: Penguin, 2008); original essay published 1893.

That wildness was thought antithetical to authority is illustrated by a representative document of early 1538, in which a northern prior denies his participation in Bigod's Rebellion of the previous year:

> And as touchinge all other p*er*sones of what sorte of men so euer theye bee, kynne or frende, or other, that shall fortune to vtter theie stomakk*es* agaynst the kinges high*n*nes, or to be accused of the same, I for my parte shall bere them less favor then I wold do to turkes: for turkes, albeyt they be infideles, yeat they be of the same nature, me*n*n as we bee—and those that do rebell agaunst their naturall prince, whome by goddes lawe and mans lawe they ought to defende, be to be reputed as no me*n*n, but as serpent*es* and wyelde beestes.[44]

In the ordered world of a monarch's realm, there was little room for such savageness. Yet this protestation, an orthodox Renaissance commonplace, obscures a central paradox about the nature of the wild: that, as it works to strip a man bare, wildness necessarily exposes the raw human stuff that had been fettered by his social clothes. This untapped vein of power, autonomy, and (as in the emerging *noble savage* trope) even virtue could fuel a shadow-self, an alternate guise that might, by giving the lie to the social world that cloaked it, enable a mode of intense actualization. There is perhaps no purer form of virility than the one experienced on the descent to join those "reputed as no me*n*n." For this reason, I suggest, the wild was a site of valuable fantasy for the disaffected Elizabethan aristocrat, who saw in it a symbolic opportunity to perform the recuperative and compensatory affective measures I have described above.

As the fundamental contest of *The Lady of May* reveals, wildness enables a more abrasive, dangerous form of opposition than its pastoral counterpart, the Elizabethan courtier's conventional mode of literary critique. The social dynamics of pastoralism have been elucidated by the work of New Historicist scholars like Louis Adrian Montrose, who suggests that pastoral forms served "to

[44] TNA, SP 1/128, fol. 93.

mediate differential relationships of power, prestige and wealth in a variety of social situations."[45] Rather than a mere "longing after innocence and happiness," the pastoral genre's "fundamental self-contradictoriness" made it a powerful vehicle of indirect argument,[46] as suggested by a much cited passage of George Puttenham:

> The poet devised the eclogue...not of purpose to counterfeit or represent the rustical manner of loves and communication, but under the veil of homely persons and in rude speeches to insinuate and glance at greater matters, and such as perchance had not been safe to have been disclosed in any other sort.[47]

It seems clear that pastoralism was the "appropriate medium in which living princes may be obliquely criticised or instructed," and that "its properties of dissimulation and insinuation make it apt to embody any motive that it might be impolitic, graceless, or dangerous to advance openly in the predatory environment of a Renaissance court."[48] But my point here is that the discourse of the wild enables a critique which is *not* appropriate, and which *is* impolitic, graceless, or dangerous—and that sometimes this friction was to be preferred, especially as an affective resource. Before he was a shepherd, it seems, Sidney was a forester. And this association with wildness was especially valuable during the first half of Elizabeth's reign, when the political and representational modes that defined her were still pliable, and when discourse (oppositional or otherwise) was not yet inflected by the cult of Gloriana, the structure of symbolic orthodoxy that governed courtly expression in the 1580s and 1590s.[49]

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[45] Louis Adrian Montrose, "Of Gentlemen and Shepherds: The Politics of Elizabethan Pastoral Form," *ELH* 50 (1983): 418.

[46] Renato Poggioli, *The Oaten Flute: Essays on Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral Ideal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 1; Judith Deborah Haber, *Pastoral and the Poetics of Self-Contradiction: Theocritus to Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 1.

[47] *AEP*, p. 127.

[48] Montrose, "Of Gentlemen and Shepherds," p. 438.

[49] I touch upon the 1580s in the conclusion of this chapter. It is important to note that Sidney's immortal identity as the Shepherd Knight risks contaminating our assessment of his early career; for example, in *The Rhetoric of Courtship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992),

Elizabethan literature, it used to be said, properly began in 1579, with a book called *The Shepherdes Calendar*. But before Spenser's landmark volume revealed the literary and political potential of the pastoral mode, there was still frustration at court, and still strategies to manage it. The elaborate mechanics of Renaissance courtesy, argues Michael Long, "is a thin skin of elegance, formal deference, and careful continence stretched over a world of raging motion and energy"; this kinetic dynamism ("capable of either destruction or creativity") pervaded the early modern discourse of wildness, making it a valuable resource for the disaffected courtier.[50] Though the pageants of the 1570s were a reification of the Elizabethan symbolic order, Leicester and Sidney routinely found means within to introduce a node of choas, by aligning themselves with this energy of the wild—a maneuver enabled by the natural setting in which they occurred. While there has been some discussion about the political nature of wildness in this period, I think that the range and significance of its affective valence has not yet been understood.[51] In this chapter, I will attempt to unpack this symbolic node of wildness in the early modern period, by exploring first the range of tropes available to Leicester and Sidney, and then how they deployed them in the era's entertainments.

In the sixteenth-century imagination, notions of wildness conjured a complex tapestry of associations, telling all manner of tales about the men and beasts that inhabited the natural world. In this folk tradition, a variety of archetypes soon emerged—though it is not easy to delineate them precisely. Writing nearly a century ago, Robert Withington observed the challenge of sorting out this cast of characters:

Catherine Bates may overstate Sidney's native association with the shepherd in her discussion of *The Lady of May*.

[50] Michael Long, *The Unnatural Scene: A Study in Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1976), p. 6.

[51] The most complete is that of Philippa Berry, who (among other things) views it alongside Neoplatonic and Petrarchan discourses of mastery. See *Of Chastity and Power: Elizabethan Literature and the Unmarried Queen* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

> The relation between wild-men, green-men, foresters, Robin Hood, the Moors and the devil is very difficult to clear up. A great many cross-influences must exist; and it seems obvious that all these figures are connected.[52]

Because these stock types share an associative range, it is not necessary to profile them completely. Instead, my hope is to sketch the broad parameters of their thematic domain, to demonstrate how they collectively activate an affective suite of aggression, virility, and opposition.

The Forester

To remain with Therion, we can begin with the figure of the forester: the man who, with trap and axe, bravely seeks his fortunes in the wild, a potent symbol of virility and worthy champion of the active life. Though the forester motif figured widely in the sixteenth-century literary imagination, it seems to have been a particular favorite of Elizabeth's father—the king who, armed with his majestic codpiece, actively mythologized himself as the font of virility. As such, the forester made regular appearances in the entertainments of Henry VIII's reign, and the records of his pageants are flush with receipts for "foster*es* koot*es* and hood*es*" and "hunter*es* yaket*es.*"[53] In fact, the forester featured in King Henry's coronation revelries, in a spectacle recorded by Hall:

> Then immediatly on the other parte came in, the forenamed eighte knightes ready armed, their Basses and Barees of their Horse, Grene Sattyn, embroudered with freshe deuises, of Bramble branches, of fine Golde curiously wroughte, poudered over all. And after theim a greate nombre of hornes blowen, by menne apparelled in Grene Clothe, with Cappes and Hosen of like suite, as Forsters or kepers, and a Pagente made like a Parke, paled with pales of White and Grene, wherein wer certain Fallowe Dere, and in thesame Parke curious Trees made by crafte, with Busshes, Fernes, and other thynges in lykewyse wroughte, goodly to beholde. The whiche Parke or deuise, beeyng brought before the Quene, had certayn gates thereof opened, the Dere ranne out thereof into the Palaice, the greye houndes were lette slippe and killed the Dere: the whiche Dere so killed, were presented to the Quene and the Ladies, by the foresaied knightes.[54]

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[52] Robert Withington, *English Pageantry: An Historical Outline*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918-20), 1:74.

[53] TNA, SP 1/24, fol. 234^{v}; 235.

[54] Edward Hall, *Chronicle Containing the History of England* (London, 1809), p. 512.

In this display, the visceral experience of the hunt (along with, as we saw for Surrey and Richmond, the violent and erotic energies it activates) spills from its spatial boundaries, in an episode of obvious excitement. This moment of natural encroachment is hardly one that strains the symbolic orthodoxy of royal authority—kings and queens, after all, loved to hunt, and the game warden or keeper, the forester figure in his most benign form, was a conventional member of the extended royal household. But the environment's blatant artificiality nonetheless suggests the larger point: when intensified to degrees not so readily absorbed by the social order, the raw stuff of wildness might prove an invaluable resource of identity management. The uncultured mode could be quite consciously cultivated, in a demonic parody of courtly *sprezzatura.*

The literary forester of the sixteenth century finds equal expression in the songs and ballads of the popular folk tradition. Most notably, a cluster of forester songs are recorded in British Library Additional MS 31922, the so-called "Henry VIII Manuscript": a songbook in which the work of composers like William Cornish and Robert Cooper is preserved alongside King Henry's own literary and musical compositions.[55] Though the forester/hunter figure assumes several different roles in this repertoire, the collection nonetheless harmonizes around two central assertions: that the wild is a site of both violent and erotic opportunity, and that the forester is the man best poised to activate it. In Cornish's allegorical "Yow and I and amyas," this erotic content is relatively restrained; the song tells of two lovers who must, like Shakespeare's Athenians, flee "to the grene wode" to find erotic safety.[56] But usually, the eroticism is far more explicit, crass, and virile. Exploiting the commonplace trope of the erotic hunt, the foresters of these songs deploy an arsenal of horns, spears, and arrows to celebrate (or mourn the decline of) the masculine lustiness with

[55] BL, Additional MS 31922. An edition of the manuscript is currently being prepared by Raymond G. Siemens, who has kindly shared his insights on it with me.

[56] BL, Additional MS 31922, fols. 45^{v}-46^{v}.

which they are naturally endowed. The opening verse, for example, of Cornish's "Blow *thi* hor*n*ne hunt*er*" entails an almost ritualistic invocation of the phallus:

> Blow *th*i hor*n*ne hunt*er*
> *&* blow *th*i horne on hye
> ther ys a do in yond*er* wode
> in faith she woll not dy
> now blow *th*i hor*n*ne hunt*er*
> & blow thi hor*n*ne ioly hunt*er*.[57]

There's little *sprezzatura* here. The song, which might be called a locker-room rendition of Wyatt's "Whoso List to Hunt," invokes a homosocial community of hunters, who (not unexpectedly) denigrate their erotic object even as they mutually seek to enjoy it: "yf ye lust to have ashott," the speaker warns his companion, "I warrant her barrayne."[58] (Exhausted by the rigorous session of hunting, he finally admits that "I myght shott no mere.")[59]

The effect is reversed in Cooper's "I haue bene a foster." Here, the forester's natural aggression and erotic autonomy are affirmed inversely, by a figure lamenting his forced retirement.[60] Reluctantly hanging his "nobyl bow / vpon the grene wod bough," the forester acknowledges that he's finally past his prime:

> Eu*er*y bowe for me ys to bygge
> myne arow ny worne ys
> The glew ys slypt frome the nyk
> when I shuld shoote I myse
> yet haue *I bene a foster.*

In the verses that follow, the song does little to hide its metaphoric import:

> lady ven*us* hath co*m*mau*n*dyd me
> owt of her courte to go.

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[57] Ibid., fol. 39^{v}.

[58] *Barrayne* here seems to combine the senses of *OED* "barren, *adj*." I.2.a ("Of animals: Not bearing, not pregnant at the usual season"), II.6 ("Bare of intellectual wealth, destitute of attraction or interest…"), and II.7 ("Unproductive of results, fruitless, unprofitable").

[59] Ibid., fol. 40.

[60] Ibid., fols. 65^{v}-66.

Ryght playnly she shewith me
that beawtye ys my foo.
yet haue. I. b*ene a foster.*

My berd ys so hard god wote
When I shulde maydyns kysse
Thay stand abak and make it strange.
lo age ys cause of this.
yet haue. I. b*ene a foster.*

This version of the forester recalls the famed speaker of Wyatt's "They flee from me," which equally explores the psychology of erotic concession. In the same manuscript, however, a companion piece reverses this erotic trajectory once again, in a song that restores the forester to his former glory:

I am a Ioly foster
I am a Ioly foster
and haue ben many a day
and foster will I bestyll
for shote ryght well I may
for shote ryght well I may.[61]

Each of the verses that follow is devoted to parrying a particular erotic charge, a lusty defense to rebuff whosoever should challenge his virility (be it his beloved, a rival, Lady Venus, or even his own self-doubt). The initial line of each tells the tale:

- wherfor shuld I hang vp my bow
- wherfor shuld I hang vp myne arrow
- wherfor shuld I hang vp my hor*n*ne
- wherfor shuld I tye vp my hownd

Though a response to "I haue bene a foster," this song never breaks its literal frame, preferring instead to develop the erotic associations by innuendo only. As such, it is difficult to judge from whom, precisely, it emanates: is this the previous speaker, mustering the courage to rejoin his fellowship of hunters? Or is it instead the boasts of a younger bachelor, whose traps are still quite

[61] Ibid., fols. 69^{v}-71.

full, and who sees no sense in trading the bounty of the wild for the singular affection of domestic bliss?

It is impossible to tell. But the point is not to settle the interpretation of a particular song, but rather to identify the thematic cluster that surrounds the forester figure: notions of erotic abundance, implicit and explicit violence, and masculine, homosocial autonomy. In fact, in "Blow *thi* hor*n*ne hunt*er*" Cornish draws explicit attention to the metaphoric currency of the hunter motif, going so far as to suggest that it's been inflated. After several conventional stanzas depicting the erotic hunt, the speaker makes an abrupt turn on the road to the song's conclusion: "I was wery of the game / I went to tauern to drynke."[62] On one level, his point is well taken: the basic tenor of these erotic tropes is familiar enough from Petrarchan conventions. But it is another thing entirely when the forester is delivered from the page or music sheet, and animated—in his native world, no less—within the multimedia spectacle of the pageant or entertainment. Though the forester is the least savage (and least subversive) denizen of the natural world, he nonetheless stands on the threshold of wildness: and as such, he begins to introduce, in regulated form, the energies of wanton violence, sexual aggression, and unfettered autonomy that only intensify as we proceed further into its depths.

Robin Hood

But before proceeding, it's important to first consider that Leicester and Sidney may have especially admired one particular forester of the "wilde Countries": the infamous Robin Hood.[63] As "chiefe gouernoure" of the wild, Robin Hood presided over an outlaw court of his merry men, a

[62] Ibid., fol. 40. But even this retreat is suggestive: he trades the fraternity of arrows for the fraternity of ale. See Mary Douglas, *Constructive Drinking* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[63] Anthony Grafton, *Grafton's Chronicle*, 2 vols. (London, 1809), 1:221.

political subculture bound by the affective affinity of mutual alienation.[64] He enjoyed a robust presence in the folklore of late medieval and early modern England—and we know he appealed to the Sidney family, who staged a Robin Hood performance during their spring festivities in 1574. There's reason to think that Leicester, Elizabeth's own "sweet Robin," may have also identified with this alternate namesake.[65]

Embodying a "permanent state of resistance to governmental authority," the Robin Hood figure of the late Middle Ages was inherently "chaotic, centrifugal, even subversive."[66] Born to a "forester [who] shot in a lusty long bow," Robin is routinely described as a "gode yeman" in the ballad tradition; for reason of this humble start, he was a star of folk traditions (like the May Day festivals) that upended the conventional social hierarchy. [67] It is this natural affinity with the common sort that underwrites the famous moral code of his guerilla war against the higher powers:

> But loke ye do no husbdone harme
> That *tylleth* with his ploughe
> 'No more ye shall no gode yeman
> That walketh by grene wode shawe;
> Ne no knyght ne no squyer
> That wol be a gode felawe
> 'These bisshoppes and these archebishoppes,
> Ye shall theme bete and bynde;
> The hye sherif of Notyingham,

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[64] *A Mery Geste of Robyn Hoode and of hys Lyfe, Wyth a Newe Playe for to be Played in Maye Games Very Pleasaunt and Full of Pastyme* (London, c. 1560), sig. Iii.

[65] This association is argued by Edward Berry, in his discussion of Sidney's *The Lady of May*; see, "Sidney's May Game for the Queen," *Modern Philology* 86 (1989): 252-64. I return to his insights below. For Leicester addressed as Elizabeth's "sweet Robin," see *Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1808), p. 473. For the Sidney performance of 1574, see *Report on the Manuscripts of Lord de l'Isle & Dudley Preserved at Penshurst Place,* 6 vols. (London, 1925-66), 1:268.

[66] Jeffrey L. Singman, "Munday's Unruly Earl," in *Playing Robin Hood: The Legend as Performance in Five Centuries*, ed. Lois Potter (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), p. 64.

[67] *The English and Scottish Popular Ballad*, ed. George Lyman Kittredge, 8 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1882-98), 3:215; R. B. Dobson and J. Taylor, *Rymes of Robin Hood: An Introduction to the English Outlaw* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1976), p. 79. See also Berry, "Sidney's May Game."

Hym holde ye in your *mynde.*'[68]

Such platitudes obscure the fundamentally violent energy that animates such a "companye of Roysters and Cutters," devoted to "robberyes and spoylng of the kinges subiects."[69] Edwin Davenport argues that this "potential for violence and aggression," when entangled with notions of charity and generosity, made Robin Hood an "ambivalent and sometimes threatening figure" in the popular imagination.[70] This ambivalence has a semantic correspondence in many of the words (like *merry*, *greenwood*, and *fellowship*) most associated with Robin's outlaw community, insofar as they might imply an in-group loyalty superseding larger commitments to the public good. The notion of *fellowship*, Davenport reminds, "implied the most social and the most antisocial behaviors," and it is telling that Falstaff commends his gang of thieves with "all the titles of good fellowship."[71] Blending anti-authoritarian aggression with moral righteousness, the merry men were thus an apt model for a community of frustrated courtiers.

But in the early modern period, Robin Hood underwent an enormous social change, and it was one that made him even more meaningful to men like Leicester and Sidney. For reasons still not entirely clear, the sixteenth century witnessed a "gentrification" of the Robin Hood legend, in which the outlaw became increasingly imagined not as a working-class hero, but as a displaced, disaffected, or exiled aristocrat.[72] In the early decades of the century, he was already a figure notable in court fiction (in 1510, for example, Henry VIII took the guise of Robin Hood to perform

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[68] Dobson and Taylor, *Rymes*, p. 80.

[69] Grafton, *Chronicle*, 1:221.

[70] Edwin Davenport, "The Representation of Robin Hood in Elizabethan Drama: *George a Greene* and *Edward I*," in *Playing Robin Hood*, p. 45.

[71] Ibid., p. 46; *1HIV* 2.4.271.

[72] For a recent discussion, see Meredith Skura, "Anthony Munday's "Gentrification" of Robin Hood," *ELR* 33 (2003), 155-80. On the development of the Robin Hood legend more generally in the period, see Thomas H. Ohlgren, *Robin Hood: The Early Poems, 1465-1560* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007).

before his queen), and as the era progressed, Robin would become a natural denizen of the courtly universe—though one fundamentally opposed, in his kingdom of the wild, to the site of court proper.[73] In the middle of the century, in fact, Grafton's chronicle imagines Robin Hood's ennobling: "beyng of a base stocke and lineage," the pre-exile Robin was "for his manhoode and chiualry aduanced to the noble dignitie of an Erle, excellyng principally in Archery, or shootyng, his manly courage agreeyng thervnto."[74] But it was on the public stage, in the second half of Elizabeth's reign, that Robin would cement his identity as a "pastoral aristocrat."[75] In the host of plays in which he appears, Robin Hood becomes associated with a set of circumstances that recalls the plight of Leicester and Sidney:

> each places the outlaw in a "historical" context of rebellion or political dispute; each describes an enclosure, set off from the everyday world, which we might call pastoral; each involves the outlaw in a love relationship with Maid Marian; each dramatizes in varying degrees the workings of social distinctions. Certainly, those parallels indicate the broad influence of cultural associations which connected a popular outlaw and figure of customary misrule with rebellion, the pastoral, love, and hierarchy.[76]

This entanglement of investments was most famously explored by Anthony Munday, whose two part sequence *The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon* and *The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon* (c. 1597-8) has been called "unquestionably the most influential of all pieces of dramatic writing about Robin Hood."[77] In Munday's telling—which is intriguingly framed as a courtly performance for Henry VIII, orchestrated by actor-director John Skelton (playing "Frier Tucke")—the folk material is mapped directly onto the historical reign of King Richard I; the outlaw

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[73] *L&P* II(ii), p. 1490; see also p. 1501 for Robin Hood in a playlet of 1515.
[74] Grafton, *Chronicle*, 1:221.
[75] Devonport, "Representation of Robin Hood," p. 58.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Dobson and Taylor, *Rymes*, p. 44.

hero is Robert, Earl of Huntington, who is exiled by the machinations of an evil court party.[78] By the end of the century, this connection between Robin and aristocratic escapism was well established: thus in *As You Like It*, Duke Senior embraces exile like "the old Robin Hood of England," surrounded by an alternate court of the "many merry men with him."[79]

Modern observers have often bewailed Robin's social climbing in the sixteenth century. Gentrification, it has been argued, "did not so much *appropriate* the vitality of the Robin Hood legend as simply drain it of social energy," while Munday has been particularly denounced for his "high-handed and cavalier" treatment of the folk tradition, from which subsequent portrayals of Robin Hood have "never completely recovered."[80] But rather than parsing the cultural stakes of this transaction, my concern is simply that it happened at all: in the second half of the sixteenth century, as Leicester and Sidney were rehearsing their grievances in the imaginative space of the wild, the Robin Hood of medieval lore was simultaneously adopting a form in which they might increasingly recognize themselves. In this new order, "May games are now war games" and "the politics of Robin Hood [are] revolutionary"—features, I suggest, that aligned with the affective mode of Sidney and Leicester, insofar as they lend a stately gravity to the tale's folk origins.[81]

Indeed, this much maligned Tudor transformation reflects a fundamental ambiguity in the legend itself, with which men like Sidney or Leicester would *always* have been able to identify. As a yeoman forester, Robin Hood inherently "straddles the social boundary between gentleman and commoner"—and romantic notions of Robin Hood as a purely populist hero risk collapsing a very

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[78] On this play, see Skura, "Gentrification," and Liz Oakley-Brown, "Framing Robin Hood: Temporality and Textuality in Anthony Munday's Huntington Plays," in *Robin Hood: Medieval and Post Medieval*, ed. Helen Phillip (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 113-28.

[79] *AYLI* 1.1.100-1.

[80] Thomas Wilson Hayes, *The Birth of Popular Culture: Ben Jonson, Maid Marian, and Robin Hood* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1992), p. 58; Dobson and Taylor, *Rymes*, p. 44; 220.

[81] Devonport, "Representation of Robin Hood," p. 58.

complex social reckoning embedded within the ballad tradition.[82] In the most basic sense, Robin's status as a yeoman is actually quite nondescript: while *yeoman* might signify one of a humble station—as when Erasmus taxonomizes "kinges, bishops, dukes, erles, barons, knyghtes, esquiers, gentylle men, yomen, and beggars"— it could equally describe a member of an aristocratic retinue, and the word even attaches to formal positions within the royal household, including the King's personal bodyguard.[83] It is thus not splitting hairs to wonder, for example, whether Robin and his men are "yeomen *of* the forest" (a category of occupation/appointment) or "yeomen…who have sought refuge *in* the forest" (a category of social standing, enacting a flight to the wild).[84] Adding further confusion is Grafton's statement that "Robyn Hood had at his rule and commaundement an hundreth tall yomen."[85] The Robin Hood legend, it follows, was a site in which a multitude of social fantasies might be concurrently nurtured. Almond and Pollard offer a pointed summary:

> The liminality of this status means that Robin Hood is not only accessible to different kinds of yeoman, but also stands on the threshold of the social divide between gentility and commonality….As a fifteenth-century literary figure, therefore, Robin need be seen neither as belonging exclusively to the milieu of the aristocratic household, or solely as a representative of a new middling sort. He reaches out beyond precise social categories. Contrary to recent thought, there is no need to make a choice between the two. When we first hear the tales in their fifteenth-century form, Robin Hood is already all things to all men.[86]

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[82] Richard Almond and A. J. Pollard, "The Yeomanry of Robin Hood and Social Terminology in Fifteenth-Century England," *Past & Present*, 170 (2001): 75. See also Kimberly A. Thompson, "The Late Medieval Robin Hood: Good Yeomandry and Bad Performances" in *Images of Robin Hood: Medieval to Modern*, ed. Lois Potter and Joshua Calhoun (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008): 102-10.

[83] Erasmus, *Preparation to Deathe, A booke as Deuout as Eloquent, Compiled by Erasmus Roterodame* (London, 1538), sig B^{v}. For the wide range of usage (including "A Yoman of the Crowne or of the Kynges garde"), see the selections in the *OED*.

[84] Almond and Pollard, "Yeomanry," p. 57.

[85] Grafton, *Chronicle*, 1:221.

[86] Almond and Pollard, "Yeomanry," p. 77.

In the 1570s, then, Leicester and Sidney would have encountered a Robin Hood whose native indeterminacy was flexible enough to suit their social aims, but who was becoming ever more consistently reimagined as a figure like themselves.

The Wildman

If the forester is but one step removed from the site of court and culture, there are many figures more natively suited to the wilderness. The most prominent is the *wild* (or *savage*) *man*, the half-beast who embodied the primordial condition, untamed yet by the civilizing process. Though known by many names (*wild man, savage man, green man, woodwose*), he is familiar to readers of Elizabethan literature; he appears on stage, for example, as Bremio in *Mucedorus*, while his image is refracted in many personae in *The Faerie Queene*, through which Spenser explores the contours of human nature. "Depicted in deliberately grotesque terms," he was "covered with a thick coat of hair, or with moss and ivy, and carrying an uprooted tree or club": he is thus a presocial form of the forester, who (with culture's guiding hand) replaced a coat of natural hair with the cured hides of his quarry, and who traded the phallic brawn of his club for the phallic finesse of an arrow.[87] As such, the wild man equally evoked associations of violence, sexuality, and raw freedom—but as a creature immune from the laws and mores of society, he amplified them to a potentially terrifying degree.[88] From this native state, the wild man thus "implied everything that eluded Christian norms and the established framework of Christian society"—that "what was uncanny, unruly, raw, unpredictable, foreign, uncultured, and uncultivated."[89] Insofar as the monarch's court was the epicenter of rule and culture, the wild man thus stood as a perfect inversion of the courtier: a

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[87] Berry, *Chastity*, p. 96.

[88] Berry notes that the figure might display "a connection with the unconscious and all the terrors it concealed" (ibid., p. 90).

[89] Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages: A Study in Art, Sentiment, and Demonology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 20.

position that might prove enormously productive for those, like Leicester and Sidney, with the temperament to inhabit it. Though the wild man existed in many forms throughout the early modern period—some, as we will see, rather benign, and others (like the noble savage), even commendable—he was, at his core, antithetical to the principles of sovereignty; this fact prescribed his orthodox role in Elizabethan pageants, to be "tamed" by the queen's presence. Yet this mechanism also undoes itself, by revealing an alternate casting, for which he is more natively bred: as a figurehead, even more than the forester, for courtly fantasies of subversion, opposition, and autonomy.

In fact, the natural affinity between the forester and wild man was apparent in the New Year festivities of 1574, a time immediately predating the major entertainments I will discuss below. In the Office of Revels accounts from this occasion, an entry glossed "Mask*es* showen at white Hall. W*ith*in the tyme aforesaide vid*elicet*" contains a pair of consecutive items:

> fforesters or hunters .vj. In Greene sattyn gaskon cotes & slopps &c.
> Torchebearers .vj.attyred in Mosse & Ivye &c. show*en* on New yeres daye at nighte.[90]

Moss and ivy were the traditional garb for the savage man, and it seems safe to assume that these figures were comingled in a pageant with a wilderness theme. In fact, only a few leaves later, a subsequent entry from the same sequence records the fees disbursed to "The Grocer for Confect*es* in the Mask of Wyldemen."[91] This phrase seems to affirm the association between foresters and savage men on this occasion, leading modern scholars (following E.K. Chambers) to refer to the performance as "The Masque of Foresters and Wild Men."[92] Though it is impossible to know what

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[90] *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. Albert Feuillerat (London, 1908), p. 193

[91] Ibid., p. 198.

[92] This is despite the fact that, as far as I can tell, this title is not used in any actual records of the period. E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), 4.89; see also John Astington, *English Court Theatre, 1558-1642* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 226.

role they might have had in this specific masque, it's worth noting that Leicester's theatrical troupe was featured prominently throughout the ongoing festivities: during this time at Whitehall, "Therle of Leicesters servaunt*es*" performed at least two plays (*Predor & Lucia* and *Mamillia*), and it was not much later that Leicester's troupe received their much celebrated royal license to perform "Comedies, Tragedies, Enterludes, and Stage-playes" throughout England, a landmark precedent that would set the stage for the subsequent history of Elizabethan theater.[93]

It was only a few months later, in June of 1574, that a pageant in Reading would require "Horstayles for the wylde mannes garment."[94] The savage man was ubiquitous in the era's shows and entertainments, in which he proved a valuable figure in the ongoing negotiations between monarch and subject. In 1578, George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*—incidentally, the primary dramatic source of *Measure for Measure*—illustrates one of his potential functions within such revelry, in a metadramatic sequence that stages a folk pageant: after there appears "Two men, apparrelled, lyke greene men at the Mayors feast, with clubbes of fyre worke," an onlooker reports that it is their charge "to keepe a passadge cleare, / That the King and his trayne, may passe with ease."[95] As we've seen, the wild man (like the forester, and like Robin Hood) has a particular association with liminality; the wild man here literalizes this notion, in his business of crowd control. At other times, the wild man was summoned as an agent of ferocious violence—as in the Twelfth Night show of 1514, when some quarrelling knights were set upon by a guerilla squad:

> sodainly came oute of a place lyke a wood. viii. wyldemen, all apparalyed in grene mosse, made with slyued sylke, with Vggly weapons and terrible visages, and there foughte with the knyghtes viii. to viii. and & after long fightyng, the armed knyghtes draue the wylde men out of their places, and folowed the chace out of the hall.[96]

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[93] For the text of the patent, see William Carew Hazlitt, *The English Drama and Stage Under the Tudor and Stuart Princes, 1543-1664* (London, 1869), pp. 25-26.

[94] *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels*, p. 227.

[95] For text and discussion, see the notes to Richard Davies, *Chester's Triumph in Honor of her Prince: as it was Performed St. George's day, 1610* (London, 1844), n.p.

[96] Hall, *Chronicle,* p. 580.

We can imagine the joy with which King Henry viewed such combat. His aforementioned fondness for the forester was apparently extended (and perhaps amplified) to his wilder cousin, who is also a perennial favorite in the entertainments of his reign:

- In 1511, revels receipts indicate payment for ivy, heads, belts, staves, and visors "for the woodwos who conducted the forest" during a February joust. (There were also "foresters sitting and going on the top of the same.")[97]
- In 1513, a pageant float was drawn by two "myghty woordwossys or wyld men."[98]
- In 1515, a group of embattled knights was again interrupted, when "6 wodwos entered suddenly and parted the tourney."[99]
- In 1522, during the aforementioned visit of Charles V, payment was made "for wodwos koot*es*."[100]
- In 1533, the coronation entry of Anne Boleyn featured (somewhat prophetically) "terrible monsters and wylde men castyng fyer, and makyng hidious noyses."[101]

Of particular interest in this data are the dates. In what I've found, the wild man's appearances are concentrated in Henry's early reign: the period when he was most invested in constructing his own identity as the most virile figure in all of Christendom. The folk figure of hypermasculine abundance found reflection in one of England's most hypermasculine, patriarchal, and phallic kings; this association lends a further texture to how Leicester and Sidney employed the wild man in their symbolic struggles with Elizabeth.

Before proceeding, a final anecdote must be told. The wild man's role in the long history of royal revelry, as well as the violent frenetic energy that he embodied, is suggested by a wedding pageant of the late fourteenth century, in which the French King Charles VI and his men had secretly donned the guise of "wylde wodehouses," full of "heare fro the toppe of the heed to the

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[97] *L&P* II(ii), p. 1492.
[98] Ibid., p. 1499.
[99] Ibid., p. 1501.
[100] TNA, SP 1/24, fol. 234^{v}.
[101] Hall, *Chronicle*, p. 799.

sowle of the fote."[102] (In addition to this hirsutism, they wore "cotes made of lynen clothe, covered with pytche, and theron flaxe lyke heare.") The festivities, however, soon turned tragic, when a torch grazed the elaborate costume:

> The heate of the fyre entred into the flaxe, wherin if fyre take there is no remedy, and sodaynly was on a bright flame, and so eche of them set fyre on other; the pytche was so fastened to the lynen clothe, and their shyrtes so drye and fyne, and so joynynge to their flesshe, that they began to brenne and to cry for helpe. None durste come nere theym; they that dyd, brente their handes, by reason of the heate of the pytche.

Only the King was saved, after he "cast himselfe into a vessell full of water, wherin they rynsed pottes"; two of the wild men "brente to dethe in the place," while others "dyed within two dayes after in gret mysery and payne." (The conflagration proved deflating: "Thus the feest of this maryage," Froissart records, "brake up in hevynesse.") Sometimes the accidents of history reveal the deepest truths—and here, the horrific fate of Charles and his men captures something essential about the fundamental intractability of the wild man archetype.

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Despite his routine appearance in the era's pageants and entertainments, the fundamental unruliness of the wild man also had more serious political consequences. I have suggested how notions of wildness seemed to capture a particular brand of fractious and oppositional energy, and it is thus not surprising that the figure developed an implicit association with a group of equally particular subversive political subjects: the "wylld men of scotland" and "wilde and mysguyded men" of Ireland, the perennial thorn in the side of English governance.[103] Spenser, we have seen, projected his fantasies of colonial dominance into Artegall, but such subjugation proved much easier in the land of Faerie: as he saw firsthand, the wilds of England's borders proved a political

[102] Froissart, *The Chronicle of Froissart*, ed. William Paton Ker, 6 vols. (London, 1903), 6:96-98 for what follows.

[103] TNA, SP 1/104, fol.175; BL, Cotton MS Caligula B/III, fol. 116.

sinkhole of enormous depth. The magnitude of the job demanded the fortitude of a Spenserian knight: in the midst of his reign, King Henry VIII declared that the "multitude of wild men upon the Borders cannot be restrained by such mean men, but that some man of great nobility should have the rule."[104]

But however brave they were, such colonial administrators were tasked with a charge that would perennially destroy careers, finances, and health; Sidney would witness this first hand in the slow deterioration of his father Sir Henry.[105] What's worse, Tudor governors often found that their attempts to tame the wild would only serve to fan the flames of discontent—as, for example, in 1551, when current Lord Deputy Sir Anthony St. Leger was forced to admit that the crown's handling of "wylde menn hathe don muche harme for yrlande."[106] In diplomatic correspondence (as in popular literature), the epithet *wild* was routinely applied to the inhabitants of Scotland and Ireland—who, like the wild man figure, accrued a thematic association with rebellion, violence, and cultural primitivism.[107] Contending with such subjects proved no easy task for Irish administrators like Geoffrey Fenton—who, incidentally, served with Spenser in Ireland, and was a notable literary translator—whose daily struggles entailed negotiating "controuersie betwene…wilde men" of Ulster.[108] And perhaps most terrifying, this discourse of wildness activated larger English anxieties about cultural contamination, apparent in the commonplace fear (articulated, for example, in Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland*) that administrators and settlers on the Borders would succumb to the native savagery: "in this barbarouse countrey," observes a position paper on

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[104] *L&P* XII(i), 636.

[105] On Sir Henry's time in Ireland, see Henry Sidney, *A Viceroy's Vindication: Sir Henry's Memoir of Service in Ireland, 1556-78*, ed. Ciaran Brady (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002).

[106] TNA, SP 61/3, fol. 9^{v}.

[107] Though in locution orthodox of his time, the Spanish mariner Don Juan de Gusman again reveals a deeper truth, when recalling his arrival on foreign shores: "two wilde men came abourd, bye whome we vnder stoode we were in Ireland" (TNA, SP 12/270, fol. 132^{v}).

[108] TNA, SP 63/124, fol. 158.

Ireland in 1596, rampant disorder and lawlessness caused even good subjects to go "roaving aboute the countrey like wild men, fleeing fro*m* one place to an other."[109] In sixteenth-century thought, the wild inhabitants of Ireland and Scotland thus posed a dire and immediate threat to Tudor notions of political obedience and cultural autonomy; in them, the natural subversiveness of the wild man folk figure burns even hotter, erupting into full-blown anarchy.[110]

Yet, at the same time, there was one exceptional occasion when crown authorities could stomach the wildness of the Border natives: when they were able to coopt it for their own agenda. Such was the case in 1545, when King Henry ordered his colonial administers to begin "levyeng and putting in order of two thousand menn of that his highnnes Realme of Irland," to be "chosen out of the most wilde and savage sorte of them there," for an imminent deployment in the "Isles of Scotland for his majesties better service."[111] Though Henry intended to kill two wild birds with one stone—he stipulated that the Lord Deputy should only muster those "whose absence shuld rather do good then hurt"—it is perhaps more rightly a game of political hot potato, in which the energies of wildness cannot be contained, but merely redirected. Here we find another glimpse of the wild man as a productive force, even though that force is one of unrestrained and unregulated violence.

The raw vitality of the wild man figure, and a further indication of his potential suitability as a site of identification, is similarly confirmed by his linkage to characters of the divine, or legendary, variety. In many instances, the wild man is associated with a pair of related figures from antiquity: Sylvanus, spirit of the forest and countryside, and Silenus, spirit of the wild. Like the wild man, both can be seen wielding uprooted trees—and Silenus, as father to the satyrs and companion to

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[109] TNA, SP 63/191, fol. 48^{v}.

[110] The wild man has also been linked to the masterless man; see Paul Brown, "'This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine': *The Tempest* and the Discourse of Colonialism," in *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 48-71.

[111] TNA, SP 60/12, fol. 50.

Bacchus, was especially prone to fits of frenzy.[112] Though distinct, both characters were associated in the Renaissance: in 1633, for example, a pageant for Charles I staged "Bacchus crowned with ivie, and naked from the shoulders up...[,] by him stood Silenus [and] Silvanus."[113] At the Queen's Pageant at the Earl of Hertfords in 1591, Sylvanus' natural affinity with the wild man is suggested by his costume:

> Then came Sylvanus with his attendants, from the wood: himselfe attired, from the middle downewarde to the knee, in kiddes skinnes with the haire on; his legges, bodie, and face, naked, but died over with saffron, and his head hooded with a goates skin, and two little bornes over his forehead, bearing in his right hand an olive tree, and in his left a scutchion.[114]

In this entertainment, which exploits an opposition of sea and forest, Sylvanus is portrayed as an erotic threat to the water nymph Neaera, a resistant virgin. But as the forest god attempts to seduce her—vowing, unconvincingly, not "to prophane her undefiled state"—he is seized upon by one of her party, who "did plucke Sylvanus over head and eares into the water, where all the sea-gods, laughing, did insult over him." With this humiliation, Sylvanus succumbs to his natural wildness:

> After that the sea-gods had sufficiently duckt Sylvanus, they suffered him to creep to land, where he no sooner set footing, but crying "Revenge, Revenge," he and his begunne a skirmish with those of the water; the one side throwing their darts, and the other using their squirtes, and the Tritons sounding a pointe of warre. At the last, Nereus [the "Prophet of the Sea"] parted the fray with a line or two, grounded

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[112] In the context of our current discussion on oppositionality, to speak of satyrs is to naturally glance at the Renaissance association between woodland creatures and those poets who (as Puttenham puts it) "tax the common abuses and vices of the people in rude and bitter speeches"—"their invectives were called satires, and themselves satyrics" (*AEP*, p. 116). As Whigham and Rebhorn explain, the famous conjunction of these notions was based on a false etymology of the Latin *satira/satura*—though the misunderstanding may also indicate a further connection between wildness and opposition, deeply embedded within the history of early modern literary culture. (Puttenham, it should be noted, avoids the confusion.)

[113] William Drummond, *The Poems of William Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. William Macdowall (Edinburgh, 1832), p. 267. Early modern texts vacillate between *Sylvanus* and *Silvanus*; I use *Sylvanus* in my own discussion.

[114] *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. John Nichols, 3 vols. (London, 1823), 3:113-14.

> on the excellence of her Majestyes presence, as being alwaies friend to Peace, and ennemy to Warre. Then Sylvanus, being so ugly, and running toward the bower at the end of the Pound, affrighted a number of the countrey people, that they ran from him for feare, and thereby moved great laughter."[115]

In contrast to the virtuous (and victorious) creatures of the sea, Sylvanus in this pageant accrues associations with violence, dissimilation, erotic coercion, ugliness, revenge, humiliation, frenzy, and riot—a menu of traits that immediately suggest his affinity with the more generalized wild man figure.

Along with such classical contribution, the wild man's symbolic meaning was also inflected by local custom. Though the wild man is a stock character of European folklore, its particular manifestation in England is indebted to the "green man" of Celtic mythology, an analogous native of the natural world—and for this reason, the savage man of the English forest is often clothed not in hides and hair, but in vines and ivy.[116] The wild man also had a curious affinity with St. George, England's patron saint and ur-champion: for example, the so-called "St. George plays" of the medieval and early modern period often employed "leaves or green branches" in their costuming.[117] The association can be detected explicitly in 1610, when the town of Chester staged a pageant to honor "the most vertous and hopefull Heire Apparent, the Prince of Wales, with that Noble victor Saint George, our aforesaid English Champion."[118] The parade is led by a pair of familiar figures:

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[115] Ibid., 3:115. The wild man was not always aligned with Sylvanus: in the Queen's 1592 progress to Bisham, the wild man discounts any allegiance to either Pan or Sylvanus, announcing himself a third term altogether (Ibid., 3:131).

[116] See Paul Thompson, "The English, The Trees, The Wild, the Green: Two Millennia of Mythological Metamorphoses" in *The Roots of Environmental Consciousness: Popular Tradition and Personal Experience*, ed. Stephen Hussey and Paul Richard Thompson (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 20-54. Though the Celtic green man, it seems, was sometimes benign, this was certainly not uniform: as with, for example, the terrifying (and antisocial) naturalism of The Green Knight.

[117] Arthur Beatty, "The St. George, or Mummers' Plays: A Study of the Protology of the Drama," *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters* 15 (1906): 291.

[118] Davies, *Chester's Triumph*, sig. A2^{v} for the quotations that follow.

> Two disguised, called Greene-men, their habit Embroydred and Stitch'd on with Iuie-leaues with blacke-side, hauing hanging to their shoulders, a huge blacke shaggie Hayre, Sauage-like, with Iuie Garlands vpon their heads, bearing *Herculian* Clubbes in their hands.

In the action that immediately follows, there suddenly appeared

> an artificiall Dragon, very liuely to behold, pursuing the Sauages entring their Denne, casting Fire from his mouth, which afterwards was slaine, to the great pleasure of the spectators, bleeding, fainting, and staggering, as though hee endured a feeling paine, euen at the last gaspe, and farewell.[119]

It is hardly subtle, I think, that two savage men slay a dragon on the day of St. George's feast; with such valor, the wild figure refracts a particularized essence of England's patron. Both the classical and native English traditions expanded the wild man's symbolic range, by allowing his inherent linkage with strength, virility, and autonomy to manifest within the cosmic register of heroes, legends, champions, and divines.

Hercules

And indeed, there is one such association that demands considerable attention. In his seminal work *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, Ernst Cassirer argues that Hercules is a principle icon of early modern autonomy: in defeating his allegorical nemesis *Fortune*, Hercules asserts the supremacy of truth, judgment, and freedom, as concentrated within the supreme notion of valor (*fortezza*)—that is, the "strength of virility itself, the strength of the human will which becomes the tamer of destiny, the *domitrice della fortuna*."[120] Embodying the proximity of man and god, Hercules was a particularly apt hero of the early modern period, and it's not surprising that he enjoyed a rich career as a symbol of Renaissance virtue. But because of his prominence, Herculean iconography was equally a site of ideological contestation: as in sixteenth-

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[119] Cf. *The Faerie Queene,* Book I.

[120] Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, trans. Mario Domandi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. 75.

century France, where social friction between the old nobility and new humanist elite resulted in two competing versions of Hercules (championing either "the knightly virtues of Fortezza" or "the humanist ideals of eloquence, civility, and prudence"), each crafted in the image of his creator.[121] For men like Leicester and Sidney, who aspired to be champions of both the pen and the sword, Hercules was an apt model indeed—an affinity suggested by Anthony Stafford, who memorialized the fallen Sidney as the "Hercules to the Muses."[122]

Yet, because of his traditional signification in art and literature—armed with a club, and draped in the skin of the Nemean Lion—Hercules went on to develop an association with the wild man topos of European folk culture. In the Middle Ages, there grew an increasing correspondence between "a man clad in fur, and one endowed with it by nature," and for obvious reasons, many "attributes of the strong Hercules...coalesced into those of the conventional wild man."[123] In some cases, the association was quite explicit: for example, a fourteenth-century French illustration of Seneca's *Hercules Furens* depicts Hercules as unmistakably wild, a club-wielding, anthropomorphized lion-man marked by both human hands and feline paws and tail.[124] As Michael Wintrob notes, this version of Hercules—which extends the *god-man* permutation to *god-man-savage*—reveals that the wild man equally encompasses "a discursive field in which the normative values of elites could be negotiated and/or contested."[125] The addition of Hercules further thickens

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[121] Michael Wintroub, "Civilizing the Savage and Making a King: The Royal Entry Festival of Henri II (Rouen, 1550)," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 29(1998): 479. See also Wayne A. Rebhorn, *The Emperor of Men's Minds: Literature and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

[122] Anthony Stafford, *Staffords Niobe: or His Age of Teares* (London, 1611), p. 113.

[123] Bernheimer, *Wild Men*, p. 101.

[124] The image, from Vatican Library MS Cod. Urbin Lat. 355, is reproduced in Max Herrmann, *Forschungen zur deutschen Theater-geschichte des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Berlin, 1914), p. 281.

[125] Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity, and Knowledge in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 249.

the associative stew of Leicester and Sidney's interest in the wild man topos: to the unrestrained, dangerous, and audacious power of the savage man, the classical hero added textures of nobility, governance, and even humanist eloquence, all without yielding the fundamental core of volatility that makes savagery so seductive in the first place.

Though such notions of virile autonomy pervade the entire Herculean discourse, of particular interest is the story of his marriage to Dejanira, a sequence that exemplifies his range of associations within the context of gendered relationships. Hercules wins Dejanira after besting a rival lover—the protean river god Achelous, in the form of a bull, who laments the emasculating way in which he was defeated:

> his cruell hand did take
> Uppon my welked horne, that he asunder quight it brake,
> And pulld it from my maymed brew.[126]

Here Hercules is doubly associated with the wild man tradition: the act of castration recalls the phallic arsenal (club, torch, bow, etc.) of the savage man and forester archetypes, whereas the horn itself, filled with "frute and flowres," comes to embody the cornucopian "plenteousness" of the natural world (102-3).

But more telling, I think, are the events that culminate in the hero's death. As Hercules trekked the globe to perform his famous feats, few suspected that matters domestic would be his undoing, sparked by a fit of erotic jealousy at home: with her husband away, Dejanira is convinced by "false and newly forged lyes" that "Hercules did cast a liking too / A Ladie called Islee" (167-69). To reignite his love, she turns to a charmed garment, imbued (she had been told) with "the powre too kindle Cupids fyre"—unaware that it had instead been cursed by one of her husband's many

[126] Ovid, *Ovid's Metamorphoses: The Arthur Golding Translation of 1567*, ed. John Frederick Nims (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 9.99-101. Subsequent line numbers (from Book 9) appear parenthetically in-text.

enemies (159). The destruction of Hercules is rendered in skin-crawling detail, as this "frying venim hent / His inwards":

> He went about to teare
> The deathfull garment from his backe, but where he pulled, there
> He pulld away the skin: and (which is lothsum to report)
> It eyther cleaved to his limbes and members in such sort
> As that he could not pull it off, or else it tare away
> The flesh, that bare his myghty bones and grisly sinewes lay. (203-8)

As Hercules goes mad with agony, he inflicts his rage upon the landscape, "throwing downe the myghtye trees and chaufing with the hilles"—but he is also driven to despair, a suggestion of the poison's concurrent assault on his psyche (258). In a final, confused address to Juno (his long tormenter), he deems his undoing a cosmos-shaking injustice, questioning how any God could allow such indignity to befall a champion. Hercules immediately inflicts his rage on Lychas, his wife's unknowing servant; the "furious Hercule caught him up, and swindging him about / His head a halfe doozen tymes or more, he floong him out / Into th'Euboyan sea with force surmounting any sling" (265-67). To end his suffering, Hercules finally constructs a funeral pyre, condemning his external flesh to the same fires that ravaged his entrails:

> Thy selfe didst spred thy Lyons skin upon the wood the whyle,
> And leaning with thy head ageinst thy Club, thou laydst thee downe
> As cheerfully, as if with flowres and garlonds on thy crowne
> Thou hadst beene set a banquetting among full cups of wyne. (283-86)

Soon after this immolation was complete, Jupiter "tooke him up above the cloudy spheere, / And in a charyot placed him among the streaming starres"—a final triumph that embodies his ultimate victory over Juno and his earthly enemies (327-28).

To review: this is the tale of the most powerful man in the world, whose noble exploits are undone by the fatal misjudgment of his well-meaning but ultimately misguided mistress, deceived by slander and innuendo into questioning his faith; he is driven to an earth-shaking frenzy, and rails against the grand design that punishes his virtue, before embracing a stoic death with notable

dignity, and being vindicated in an elaborate apotheosis. (And along the way, he gets to enjoy utterly obliterating one of the men who served that mistress.) I hope it's clear why Leicester and his compatriots may have been taken by this particular fantasy of masculine autonomy.

The significance of the Hercules/wild man association, and its symbolic importance as a site of antisociality for Leicester and Sidney, is splendidly illustrated by a moment that occurred less than three months after the performance of *The Lady of May*, on Queen Elizabeth's progress into Suffolk.[127] In the first week of August, during her longer stay at Bury St. Edmunds, Elizabeth spent a day at Hawstead in the newly renovated manor house of Sir William Drury. She encountered there a familiar figure, as the story is told by the Reverend John Cullum, the land's eighteenth-century owner:

> Immediately upon your peeping through the wicket, the first object that unavoidably struck you, was a stone figure of Hercules, as it was called, holding in one hand a club across his shoulder, the other resting on one hip, discharging a perennial stream of water, by the urinary passage, into a carved stone bason. On the pedestal of the statue is preserved the date, 1578, which was the year the queen graced this house with her presence; so that doubtless this was one of the embellishments bestowed upon the place against the royal visit.[128]

This statue still keeps vigil over Hawstead Place Farm: though badly damaged in the intervening centuries, it was fully restored in 1977 for the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II—and it can, I am assured by the archivists at the Suffolk County Records Office, still urinate on demand today. The figure seems deeply inspired by the wild man tradition—so much so, in fact, that Cullum questions his identity altogether: "Perhaps he might be designed to represent a wild man, or savage, having

[127] On this progress more generally, see Zillah Dovey, *An Elizabethan Progress: the Queen's Journey into East Anglia, 1578* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1996).

[128] Sir John Cullum, *The History and Antiquities of Hawsted* (London, 1784), pp. 131-32.

no attribute of Hercules but his club, and his limbs being covered with thick hair, and his loins surrounded with a girdle of foliage."[129]

The original designation is far more appropriate than Cullum suspects, given the close linkage of the figures in the Renaissance imagination. And while we may attribute Cullum's squeamishness to a proto-Victorian sensitivity—"modern times," he observes, "would scarcely devise such a piece of sculpture as an amusing spectacle for a virgin princess"—there's nonetheless a sense in which he is exactly right: the celebration of the Herculean savage, boldly pissing, is here a literal monument to the *fortezza* of autonomy, virility, and aggression, in a way that cannot but be aimed at the Queen herself.[130] Though a conventional trope of the visual arts, Hercules here adopts the same "hand on hip" pose that remains today so famously associated with Elizabeth's father; whether or not this echo was intentional, the statue nonetheless is a tribute to both patriarchy and the phallus, comically erected on the queen's behalf. Hercules was not an outcast of the Elizabethan symbol system, and his conventional associations lend a shield of plausible deniability against any challenge to the statue's orthodoxy. Yet nonetheless, I can't see how such a monument could *not* entail some degree of audacious opposition. I'd call it a pillar of passive aggression—though little seems passive about this Hercules.[131]

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[129] Suffolk County, Bury St Edmunds Record Office, K 914/2/3; Cullum, *History and Antiquities,* p. 131.

[130] Cullum, *History and Antiquities*, p. 132.

[131] For the sake of brevity, I have here only addressed some of the associations that recommend Hercules as a figure of interest to Leicester and Sidney. It's equally worth noting, for example, that Hercules had a robust career as a Senecan hero in the period, and that his appearance in *Hercules Furens* was integral to the development of English revenge drama. This is doubly relevant: the Sidney circle has famous ties to both Senecan philosophy (via Philip and Robert's continental contacts) and Senecan drama (via Mary Sidney and her circle), while revenge drama more generally has been associated with the spirit of Protestant providentialism to which Sidney and Leicester were inclined. On Senecanism and the early history of the revenge play, see my "Vengeance, Variously: Revenge Before Kyd in Early Elizabethan Drama," *Early Theatre* 12 (2009): 117-134; on the theological import of the genre, see Frank R. Ardolino, *Apocalypse & Armada in Kyd's Spanish Tragedy* (Kirksville: Northeast Missouri State University, 1995).

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Virility; aggression; autonomy; rebellion; violence; lust; subversion; phallicism, patriarchy; heroism; primitivism; naturalism; frenzy; audacity; degeneration; virtue: the discourse of wildness evoked many things in the sixteenth-century English imagination. Some were commendable, even honorable. But many still were chaotic, posing an inherent danger to the core principles of governance and social order—or, perhaps worse still, in case of many of the gendered terms, announcing a specific challenge to the authority of a (virgin) queen. The discourse of wildness was a thing of endless productivity for a cadre of disaffected men in Elizabeth's court, in which they could find a thematic and formal vocabulary to perform affective states of frustration, discontent, and antisociality—and indeed, to dismantle, however temporarily, the very notions of courtship.

With the previous discussion in mind, I will now consider how the oppositional thematics of wildness are deployed by the Leicester/Sidney circle in three entertainments of the late 1570s: the pageants at Kenilworth and Woodstock in 1575—which begin to employ the disaffected poetics I have been describing—and Sidney's *The Lady of May* in 1578—which, in response to three additional years of frustration, is even more explicit in promoting the discontent of its sponsors. In each performance, elements from the lexicon of the wild are strategically exploited, in the service of an antisocial undersong, sounding notes of negative affect even within the celebratory mode of the entertainment proper. Such songs would soon enough become the official soundtrack of the pasture—but in the 1570s, they emerged from a considerably more frenetic place, and were invested with fantasies of a wilder nature.

LEICESTER AND SIDNEY, ENTERTAINERS

Kenilworth, 1575

In July of 1575 Leicester hosted an entertainment for the roving queen at his magnificent castle of Kenilworth. Present during the nineteen-day celebration was the young Philip Sidney, freshly returned from his two-year finishing tour of Europe; the primary poetic architect, however, was the well-known writer (and grizzled soldier) George Gascoigne, who seems to have guided much of the festivities.[132] The events were recorded in two contemporary accounts: Robert Laneham's eyewitness report, published in 1575 as *A Letter Whearin Part of the Entertainment Vntoo the Queenz Maiesty at Killingwoorth Castl in Warwik Sheer in this Soomerz Progress 1575 is Signified*, and Gascoigne's pseudo-official version, published (anonymously) a year later as *The Princely Pleasures at the Courte of Kenelwoorth*.[133] As these texts reveal, the queen was honored with such a panoply of spectacle—song and dance, playlets, combat, pyrotechnics, and special effects—that it has been claimed that the event was a last-ditch, *de facto* marriage proposal on Leicester's behalf.[134] Yet, in spite of this motive—or, perhaps more rightly, because of it—there also exist moments of oppositional energy, in which Leicester and his proxies anticipate the likely failure of this very proposition. In doing so, they find means to assert their own wild autonomy, by

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[132] On Gascoigne as a soldier, see Adam N. McKeown, *English Mercuries: Soldier Poets in the Age of Shakespeare* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009).

[133] Robert Laneham, *A Letter Whearin Part of the Entertainment Vntoo the Queenz Maiesty at Killingwoorth Castl in Warwik Sheer in this Soomerz Progress 1575 is Signified* (London, 1575), printed in Nichols, *Progresses*, 1:420ff; Gascoigne, *The Princely Pleasures at the Courte at Kenelwoorth* (London, 1576), printed in ibid., 1:485ff. Subsequent citations to the performance will appear parenthetically in-text, referring to Volume 1 of Nichols's *Progresses.*

[134] See, for example, Doran's discussion in "Juno Versus Diana: The Treatment of Elizabeth I's Marriage in Plays and Entertainments, 1561-1581," *The Historical Journal* 38 (1995): 266ff. For other readings of the event, see the discussion in Sandra Logan, *Text/Event in Early Modern England* (New York: Ashgate, 2007) and Cora Fox, *Ovid and the Politics of Emotion in Elizabethan England* (New York: Palgrave, 2009).

promoting the suitor's fundamental inability to be integrated in (and thus *reduced* to) the symbolic universe of his beloved.

On the first day of her stay, Elizabeth was lavishly celebrated even before she reached the grounds of Kenilworth proper: "there met her on the way, somewhat neere the Castle[,] *Sybilla*, who prophecied unto her Highness, the prosperous raigne that she should continue, according to the happy beginning of the same" (486). With this happy ambush, Elizabeth was treated to a welcome verse, promising a peaceful future for herself, her subjects, and her realm.

Yet even within this conventional welcome, the Sybil ("placed in an arbor in the parke neere the high-way where the Queen's Majestie came") finds subtle means to establish a demarcation between the feminine source of the queen's authority and the masculine consensus by which it is enabled. This tension is detected even within her ostensibly benign prayer for a peaceful realm:

> You shall be called the Prince of Peace,
> and peace shal be your shield,
> So that your eyes shall never see
> the broyls of bloody field. (486-87)

Beneath the conventionality of these lines, there is a literal fact of no small importance: Elizabeth's eyes *won't* ever see the field of war, and this is precisely the feature that separates her from martial subjects like Leicester, Sidney, and Gascoigne. Though Elizabeth may preside over the fictive combats of the pageant world, the Sybil reminds that she, unlike her mighty father, was a prince exiled from the theater of war. Elizabeth's engagement with the realm of blood and steel was restricted to the kind of martial roleplaying we see before Tilbury—a justly celebrated gesture, but one whose rhetorical power is ultimately premised on Elizabeth's fundamental incompatibility with the realm of genuine combat. (That is to say, the moment is notable *because* of the disjunction between her natural form and the warrior persona she had donned.)

But while the queen may have been excluded, the site of war was nonetheless a key domain for the formation and management of aristocratic identity, in which men like Leicester and Sidney

strove to "vindicate their honor and authority" through exploits in the field.[135] The same neo-chivalric spirit that inspired their flair for martial pageantry assured that the symbolic combats they staged were an inadequate substitution for the thing itself: the real place for affirming aristocratic ontology was in battle, and this was the birthright that Elizabeth insistently denied them. Indeed, when the opportunity was finally presented, many would ruthlessly seize it: the queen was perhaps never more disobeyed than in times of war, when her generals would routinely subordinate her will to their own. (As we will see in the next chapter, this was a particularly favorite tactic of the Earl of Essex.) These social dynamics are being negotiated even within the celebratory mode of the pageant—and, for all its orthodoxy, the observation that Elizabeth's "eyes shall never see / the broyls of bloody field" cannot help but activate alternate ways to read the mock-combats that will be subsequently staged for her entertainment.

After the confirmation that Elizabeth's reign will be marked by tranquility, she encountered a bellicose dumbshow that suggested the opposite:

> Her Majesty passing on to the first gate, there stode in the leades and battlementes thereof, sixe trumpetters hugelie advaunced, much exceeding the common stature of men in this age, who had likewise huge and monstrous trumpettes counterfetted, wherein they seemed to sound: and behind them were placed certaine trumpetters, who sounded indeede at her Majestie's entrie. And by this dum shew it was ment, that in the daies and reigne of King Arthure, men were of that stature; so that the Castle of Kenelworth should seeme still to be kept by Arthur's heires and their seruants. (488-90)

The trumpeters, with their exaggerated height, physical prowess, and "huge and monstrous" phallic devices, are an obvious sign of virility, recalling the brawn of the savage man archetype. It is thus not surprising that they announce Leicester as a figure of Arthur: Britain's ur-champion, a heroic warrior, the font of chivalry, a defender of the faith, and (above all) a *king.*

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[135] Richard C. McCoy, *The Rites of Knighthood: The Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 18.

It is difficult to think that this is not, on some level, a challenge to Elizabeth's authority: she is being welcomed as a *subject* to an alternate realm, an artifact of England's heroic past, in which Leicester rules as a warrior-king. This fiction was intensified by the setting. Unlike the new-era prodigy homes of Burghley and Hatton (designed for leisure and entertainment), Kenilworth was an audacious archaism: a siege-worthy fortification in the medieval style, recalling the "overmighty peers" that Elizabeth's father and grandfather struggled so endlessly to undo. In the 1570s, Leicester continued to fortify and expand his arsenal at Kenilworth, from which he commanded a nearly unthinkable reserve of potential power:

> Not for over half a century had a subject possessed such formidable military resources. If only he could have ensured the loyalty of his men, Leicester was in a position to defy all comers, even perhaps his sovereign. He was the last of his kind in English history.[136]

To be sure, given the fundamental instability of sixteenth-century England, this arsenal was not merely for show: but at the same time, it's hard to imagine that such gestures weren't also highly symbolic, transforming Kenilworth into a counterculture monument to the force of Leicester's exceptional will. When we recall that Henry VIII was invested in the mythos of Arthur—whose ancient authority would premise his world-shattering claims of religious prerogative[137] —it

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[136] Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641,* Abridged (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 107.

[137] Associated already with the Welsh-born Tudor dynasty, Arthurian myth became crucial political fodder during Henry's struggles with Rome. The historical Arthur, it was claimed by the crown, had ruled as "emperor" of the British realm— a title duty-bound to English kings, surpassing even the authority of popes. There was, in turn, a surge of (often vested) interest in authenticating the contours of Arthurian myth; John Leland, for example, was especially invested in Arthuriana during his famous travels. On this issue see, Alan Maccoll, "The Construction of England as a Protestant "British" Nation in the Sixteenth Century," *Renaissance Studies* 18 (2004): 582-608; C.T. Wood, "Guenevere at Glastonbury: A Problem in Translation(s)," *Arthurian Literature* 16 (1998): 23-40;; James P. Carley, "Polydore Vergil and John Leland on King Arthur: The Battle of the Books," *Interpretations* 15 (1984): 86-100; Victor Watts "English Place-Names in the Sixteenth Century: The Search for Identity," in *Sixteenth-Century Identities,* ed. A. J. Piesse (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 34-57; and Stan Mendyk, "Early British Chorography," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 17 (1986): 459-81.

becomes clear that the symbolic world of Kenilworth provides an alternate court to Elizabeth's own, one grounded in the patriarchal principles of a hypothetical Dudleian rule.[138] And given this investment in virility, it's unsurprising who Leicester elected as the champion of his heroic, masculine realm: "And when her Majestie entred the gate, there stood Hercules for Porter" (490).

As the festivities continued, the pageant's engagements with the discourse of wildness became even more explicit. Later in the week, Queen Elizabeth encountered a familiar figure:

> For about nien a clock, at the hither part of the chase, whear torch-light attended, oout of the woods, in her Majestiez return, rooughly came thear foorth *Hombre Salvagio*, with an oken plant pluct up by the roots in hiz hande, himself forgrone all in moss and ivy. (436)

At first unaware of Elizabeth's presence, the savage man has been stirred by the disruption of his domain, and seeks someone to explain "Why all these worthy Lords and Peeres, / are here assembled so" (494). In a comic exchange with Echo, the wild man (who seems to have been played by Gascoigne) is led through a brief précis of the pageant's proceedings to date—a recapitulation that serves to emphasize the extraordinary efforts of "*O* Dudley," who

> gave himselfe and all,
> A worthy gift to be received,
> and so I trust it shall. (496)

(Wishful thinking, at least.) He finally spots Elizabeth herself, the guest of honor; he falls to his knees, begging that she might accept the service of such a "wilde and savage man" (497).

Unlike many of the playlets during the progress, the saga of the Savage Man is left puzzlingly unresolved; despite his promise (and willingness) to yield, there is no catharsis, no transformation,

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[138] In fact, Elizabeth pushed back against this challenge. At one point during the festivities, the queen discovers "*The Lady of the Lake*," presiding over one of the castle's pools, which she had "kept…sins King Arthur'z days." But when the gracious lady offer to yield her domain, Elizabeth responds with a splendid barb: "we had thought indeed the Lake had been oours, and do you call it yourz now? Well, we will herein common more with yoo hereafter" (Nichols, *Progresses*, 1:431). For discussion, see Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 69.

and no integration into the social order. The texts give no hint of Elizabeth's response, and the terms of his submission are accordingly unclear. Indeed, his final words to the queen contain a barely concealed challenge—"And take in worth the wilde man's words, / for else you do him wrong"—and his concluding remarks, as Gascoigne tells it, are ones of rejection and despair:

> let me go seeke some death,
> Since I may see this Queene no more,
> good greefe nowe stop my breath. (498)

An odd way, it seems, to conclude the sequence, notable in itself for flouting the conventions of the wild man transformation trope.

But the reason for this abrupt ending may be indicated by an event that is omitted in Gascoigne's text. As Laneham tells it, a moment of enormous interest had concluded the wild man episode:

> But I shall tell yoo, Master Martin, by the mass, of a mad adventure. Az thiz Savage, for the more submission, brake hiz tree asunder, kest the top from him, it had allmost light upon her Highness hors head; whereat he startld, and the gentleman mooch dismayd. See the benignittee of the Prins; as the footmen lookt well to the hors, and hee of generositee soon calmd of himself—"no hurt, no hurt!" quoth her Highness. Which words I promis yoo wee wear all glad to heer; and took them too be the best part of the Play. (437-38)

This is, to be sure, a mere accident. But how striking is it, that of all the possible disasters waiting to happen in a royal progress (early modern fireworks!), it is the figure of the savage man who nearly brings disaster to the queen—and, even more perfectly, via the very act that is intended to signal his submission to her. Like the tragic wedding in the French court, this is a bizarrely appropriate anecdote—one that, in materializing the inherent danger of the wild man and showing the byproduct of his submission, is endlessly suggestive about the dynamics of Elizabethan courtly life. There is a cost to the civilizing process of Elizabeth's court: though her courtiers might sublimate much of their desires, energy cannot be destroyed, and will leak out somewhere. The danger, here

as in the rest of life, is that it will boomerang right back at her. Although according to rumors floated in a contemporary Spanish dispatch, it wasn't exactly a boomerang that she had to dodge:

> La Majestad de la Reina, que está tan léjos de aquí como digo, en un castillo de Milord de Lecester, nombrado Quilinghuorth, á donde el Conde la ha servido y hecho muchas fiestas, yendo un dia á caza, como se dice, un traidor la tiró con una ballesta, al cual prendieron luégo, aunque otros dicen que lo hizo tirando á los venados sin pensar mal, y la vira pasó por junto á la Reina sin hacerla daño, gracias á Dios.[139]

The queen, it seems, did not have much luck with clubs, arrows, or phallic objects generally on this visit. Although the report lacks corroboration, it raises an interesting question nonetheless: was there a Robin Hood lurking in the woods of Leicester's Kenilworth?

One performance of the Kenilworth events, the Masque of Zabeta, never came to fruition, despite its apparent design as a centerpiece of the week's festivities.[140] The masque reveals how the nymph Zabeta, the proud former disciple of Diana, embraces Juno and her cult of the "wedded state" (504).[141] (The performance also features "a man cladde all in Mosse," an apparent objective correlative to Leicester's fantasies of kingly autonomy [503].)[142] But though this particular show was cancelled, the earl seemed determined that Elizabeth would hear the tale of Zabeta, one way or the other. In the final moments before "her departure from thence," Leicester apparently "commanded Master Gascoigne to devise some farewel worth the presenting"—and to do so, the poet clad himself "like unto Sylvanus, God of the woods" (515).

Of the dozens of allegorical figures that had appeared throughout the week, Gascoigne selects the lord of "these woods and wildernes" to engage Elizabeth for a final time; he follows

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[139] "The queen majesty, as I write, is far away from here, at my Lord of Leicester's castle, called Kenilworth, where the earl has treated her to many festivities. It is said that one day, while hunting, a traitor (whom they then seized) shot at her with an arrow—though others say he was just shooting at the deer, and meant no harm. The bolt passed by the queen without hurting her, thank God" (my translation); *Colección de Documentos Inéditos*, 91:88.

[140] The show was "prepared and redy (every Actor in his garment) two or three days together," but was postponed indefinitely for "lack of opportunity and seasonable weather" (515).

[141] See Doran, "Juno Versus Diana," p. 266.

[142] This figure announces himself as "the wylde man's sonne."

alongside the queen as she continues her last hunt, delivering a series of speeches (as in *The Winter's Tale*) designed to entice an extension of her visit. As Sylvanus explains it, the "late alteration in the skyes" should be attributed to the "flowing tears" of the gods, grieved at her imminent departure, and the anticipation of which reverberates throughout the natural world:

> not onely the skies scowled, the windes raged, the waves rored and tossed, but also the fishes in the waters turned up their bellies, the deer in the woods went drowping, the grasse was wery of growing, the trees shooke off their leaves, and all the beastes of the forrest stoode amazed. (517)

But Sylvanus next turns to the show that had been ruined by this upheaval: in lieu of the performance, Gascoigne himself unfolds the "strange and pitiful adventures" of Zabeta—the nymph "surpassing all the rest for singuler gifts and grace"— and her unlucky suitors—"whome shee hath turned and converted into most monstrous shapes and proportions" (518-19). As they proceed throughout the forest, Sylvanus narrates this gallery of wretched souls (such as *Constancie*, turned to "this Oak," or *Inconstancie*, to "yonder Popler"), forcing the queen to to gaze upon the casualties of her displaced erotic obstinacy (519).[143] Of particular interest is the fate of *Ambition*:

> she dyd by good right condemn him into this braunch of Ivy, the which can never clyme on hygh nor flourish without the helpe of some other plant or tree; and yet, commonly, what tree soever it ryse by, it never leaveth to wynde about it, and strayghtly to infolde it, untyll it have smowldred and killed it. (519)

Though a normal enough indictment of the courtly rat race—and of the clawing upstarts that so aggrieved men like Sidney and Leicester—ivy is also the essential signifier of the English wild man, an association that substantially thickens the moment's symbolic importance. On one hand, the wild man is a living monument to the deleterious effects of unchecked courtly ambition: covered in ivy, he offers visual witness to the process of predation that Sylvanus describes, and that slowly

[143] In the guise of Zabeta, Elizabeth is implicitly associated with Circe, and is thus an ancestor of Spenser's enchantress Acrasia—who has herself been read as a refraction of Elizabeth. See, for example, Louis Montrose, "Spenser and the Elizabethan Political Imaginary," *ELH* 69 (2002): 907-46, and more generally, Judith Yarnall, *Transformations of Circe: The History of an Enchantress* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

erodes the bedrock of aristocratic ontology. Yet on the other, the wild man is not simply covered in ivy, but is made *of* it: in this sense, he is ambition *animated*, with the seizing of autonomy it entails, and with the threat of destruction to those who might impinge it. And this from Sylvanus, likely dressed in ivy himself! Following an increasingly familiar pattern, this slick maneuver embraces the alluring threat of courtly ambition even as it righteously condemns it.

The centerpiece of Sylvanus' catalogue is the figure of *Deepedesire*, who was turned into "this Hollybush...now furnished on every side with sharpe pricking leaves, to prove the restlesse prickes of his privie thoughts" (520). Unlike Zabeta's other victims, desire is given the opportunity to speak for himself—but his attention is fixed not on his tormentor, but Elizabeth. He returns to the queen's meteorological significance, reviewing how these "great floods of mone" have disrupted the natural order, before imploring her to

> commaunde againe
> This Castle and the Knight,
> which keepes the same for you:
> These woods, these waves, these foules, these fishes
> these deere which are your due! (521-22)

Such a pledge, he assures, will redeem his natural form. Sylvanus equally craves, in his final words, "that you would either be a suter for him unto the heavenly powers, or else but onely to give your gracious consent that hee may be restored to his prystinate estate" (523).

But like the savage man episode, the princely pleasures of Kenilworth end indeterminately, at least as it appears in the textual record. Elizabeth's response is not recorded, but the progress proceeded as expected: an implicit rejection of desire, as it is framed by this final encounter. But why, to culminate this week of extravagance and expense, was Elizabeth even given this final opportunity to reject her host? Did Leicester (and Gascoigne) really expect the queen to embrace the offer?

The answer, I think, is that this rejection has been anticipated, and written into the text itself, via the contestatory forms that Leicester inhabits: forms that, in effect, underwrite the failure of their own rhetorical aims. The very shape of Leicester's transmuted *desire* (the consequence of his enforced submission to the Elizabeth-figure Zabeta) flaunts its aggression, threatening to prick those who encroach upon its space. The threat of violence is specifically phallic, as when Sylvanus quips on the differences of *he Holly* and *she Holly*: "nowe some will say that the she Holly hath no prickes; but thereof I intermeddle not" (520). But the prystinate form of Leicester's desire—that is, the desire that *would* be unleashed by Elizabeth's favor, and to which she herself would submit—is more threatening still in the sheer magnitude of its force:

> I am that wretch *Desire*,
> whom neither death could daunt;
> Nor dole decay, nor dread delay,
> Nor fayned cheere inchant:
> Whom neither care could quench,
> nor fancie force to change. (521)

It is only Zabeta's rejection that has capped the bottle of desire—and it is hard to imagine why Elizabeth would want to uncork it.

In 1575, it would have been nearly unthinkable for Elizabeth to give her hand to the Earl of Leicester. I find it hard to believe that any of his associates expected that she would. While this certainly does not mean that Leicester would have rebuffed the opportunity to become an Arthurian king of England, it does suggest that he was aware of his suit's near impossibility—and accordingly, that he and his agents knowingly constructed a fictive world that was ultimately destined to memorialize its failure. But, in anticipation of this inevitable end, Leicester populates this world (and associates himself with) a cast of wild figures that are adversarial, threatening, and fundamentally unsuitable for engaging the queen: a maneuver that, when considered retrospectively, coopts the autonomy of Elizabeth's choice, and reconfigures her rejection as a confirmation of his own fundamental power. This consolation is grounded upon the performance

of opposition and contention; in the texts of the Kenilworth shows, the discourse of wildness functions as an escape clause, drafted ahead to absorb and refashion the sting of frustrated desire. It is no accident that Leicester's guise of the holy bush so resembles Zabeta's lover *Contention,* who was transformed to a "Bramble Bryer" armed to "catch and snach at… garments, and every other thing that passeth by it" (519).

Woodstock, 1575

Only weeks after the festivities at Kenilworth, the summer progress brought Elizabeth to another such event at Woodstock, the home of Leicester's client Sir Henry Lee—the man who would, as the queen's official champion, go on to become the guardian of the Elizabethan neo-chivalric cult of honor. During her stay at Woodstock, Elizabeth was treated to another round of festivities, again executive-produced by Leicester. In addition to liberal bouts of hunting and feasting, the centerpiece of the entertainment was the two-part drama of Caudina and Contarenus, a rousing tale of love and public service.[144] The allegory, which seems to have a direct association with the politics (and thematics) of Leicester's party, announces itself as a fable in which

> if you marke the woords w*ith* this present world, or were acquainted with the state of the deuises, you shoulde finde no lesse hidden then vttered, and no lesse vttered then shoulde deserue a double reading ouer, euen of those (with whom I finde you a companion) that haue disposed their houres to the study of great matters.[145]

If, in the Kenilworth entertainment, the devices of opposition were relatively subdued—a contingency plan, I have suggested, transforming royal rejection into a badge of empowered alienation—Leicester's antisociality here is more blatant, openly deploying the saga of Caudina and

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[144] The authorship of the pageant is unclear—Gascoigne, who probably did not write it, was nonetheless at the performance, and presented a manuscript copy of the text to Elizabeth at New Year 1576. See the discussion in Gabriel Heaton, *Writing and Reading Royal Entertainments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[145] *The Queenes Maiesties Entertainement at Woodstock* (London, 1585), sig. B. Subsequent citations to this entertainment will appear parenthetically, in-text.

Contarenus to assert the supremacy of his masculine prerogative. The allegory is so jarring, in fact, that a century ago J. W. Cunliffe suggested "that the Woodstock devices were directed not by or for Leicester, but against him"—an interpretation that, though unconvincing, underscores the pageant's inherent contentiousness.[146]

As in many such entertainments, the host of the Woodstock festivities is a denizen of the wild. The story is unfolded by the unfortunate Hemetes, a blind recluse who presides over an isolated bower "couered with greene Iuie, and seates made of earthe with sweete smelling hearbes." Recalling Zabeta's victims at Kenilworth, he is defined primarily as a casualty of erotic violence, the terms of which are twisted into the larger narrative (B).[147] Once a strapping knight, Hemetes fell for a coy enchantress ("most dainty to bee dealt with"); to rebuff his advances, she "put on the shape of a Tigris so terrible to behold" that he was convinced (prophetically) to "neuer more seete eie on her" (B2^{v}).[148] This vow became literalized, however, when he was "sodainly stroken blind" by Venus, as punishment for his rejection of love (B3). Although his own history is only ancillary to the pageant proper (and though he was destined, in the usual manner, to be restored by Elizabeth's presence), this hermit figure is nonetheless a central framing device, which situates the narrative within the realm of wildness. The symbolic freight of enforced hermitage will stand in sharp contrast to the position of self-imposed exile that the story's Leicester figure will eventually occupy.

In the pageant, Leicester primarily occupies the role of Contarenus, "a knight, of estate but meane, but of value very greate," whose love for Princess Caudina has been frustrated by her father (a "mightie Duke" of Cambria), at whose behest he was magically exiled for a term of seven years

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[146] J. W. Cunliffe, "The Queenes Majesties Entertainment at Woodstocke," *PMLA* 26 (1911): 130.

[147] As we will see further in *The Lady of May*, the hermit is another permutation of courtly antisociality, sharing features with both the forester and the shepherd.

[148] See OED, "dainty, adj." 5c: "with infin.: Disinclined or reluctant (to do)."

(B^{v}; B). In the first sequence of the pageant, Hemetes recounts how Caudina, fleeing her father's court, is finally reunited with her champion;[149] in her journey, she becomes the (chaste) companion of Loricus, another knight jilted in love, who serves as her protector until Contarenus's arrival.[150] In the second half of the entertainment, a playlet works to undo the forward progress of the first. In this action, "the haughty duke" elects to "leaue his Princely states" in search of his daughter—and though hardly a sympathetic figure, he now assumes the role of the questing knight, "whom fortune doth constraine / with fruitless toyle to trauel stil in vaine" (D^{v}; D). A Queen of Faerie (before the figure was synonymous with Elizabeth) moderates their eventual encounter, in which the Duke begs her, on behalf of "Countries good," to "neglect / the Loue of him which led you so astray" (E2). Despite rigorous debate on the nature of civic duty, Caudina will not budge: as a last resort, the Duke turns to Contarenus himself, "to see if his desire might be delaide" for the public good (F2).

It is thus by his own will that Contarenus, after hearing further deliberations, reluctantly forsakes his long-sought beloved, vowing to "yeeld to Countries good / the thing which to possesse so neere he stood" (F3^{v}). With good reason, this is often taken as the swan-song to Leicester's kingly ambitions; Berry, for instance, argues that here the earl offers "explicit" acknowledgment that "his service could not be rewarded with marriage."[151] But the larger point, I think, is the extent to which the Leicester-figure assumes complete mastery over his beloved: it is Contarenus who takes possession of Caudina, and it is Contarenus who agrees to dissolve their love—in an act, what's more, that only serves to glorify his civic virtue. If the Kenilworth entertainment is underwritten by a bond of interpretive insurance, in which rejection is anticipated and accounted

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[149] Doran notes, quite astutely, that something of Leicester is *also* seen in Caudina, the "active and passionate lover who had refused to accept objections to an unequal match and had embarked on an adventurous quest to rescue her knight" ("Juno Verses Diana," p. 268).

[150] Loricus was apparently played by Lee himself.

[151] Berry, *Of Chastity and Power,* p. 101.

for in advance, here there is hardly need for such safeguards: the Woodstock pageant dismisses Elizabeth before she has any chance to say otherwise.

Such a posture is reflected in Contarenus's refusal to be reintegrated into the newly harmonized Cambrian court. Though the Duke welcomes him home, and vows to reward him handsomely for his loyalty, Contarenus views his exile as final:

> My Lord, what you haue done, your state maintains
> exiling me that did offend your eye,
> My life must be in course of restlesse paines,
> for her whom care of countrey doth denye.
> Good hap light on the land where I was borne,
> though I doe liue in wretched state forlorne. (F4)

The extent of his sacrifice is magnified by this oppositional mode; by construing himself as a political martyr, Contarenus only serves to amplify his own stoic resolve. The knight leaves once again as a man apart, a Herculean hero cast out from his own brood, but one whose unimpeachable virtue is now free to serve a master who might better appreciate its value. Alienated from the courtly world, he is left to roam "where so aduentures hard shal carry"—that is, throughout the wilds and frontiers of unknown lands (G3). But what's more, Contarenus explicitly declares that this antisocial impulse will, in fact, ultimately forge new channels of affinity:

> And tel my Lady deere that I intend,
> henceforth to seeke if I may meet her friend,
> *Loricus* whom the Hermit did commend,
> Ile bid him thinke and hope one day to find
> Reward for that his faithful seruice long,
> til when we both may plaine of fortunes wrong. (G2^{v})

Like Leicester and Sidney, the disappointed knights Contarenus and Loricus are conjoined in a community of discontent.[152] And even in absence, the sociospatial valence of this community is suggested by the *de facto* member Hemetes, the third such jilted knight: this is a collective of the

[152] Like that of the foresters, it is also a homosocial community.

wild, united by the mutual affective experience of frustration, and bonded by the mutual social experience of courtly alienation.

Perhaps, as is often suggested, the Woodstock pageant does entail Leicester's vow to renounce his erotic claim to Elizabeth, if he is only given leave to pursue his fortunes elsewhere—like, say, in the Low Countries, backed by an army of her soldiers.[153] But even so, I'm inclined to see the *affective* essence here as one of relative positionality, in which Leicester announces the productiveness of rejection, and his readiness to "retire and draw [his] selfe apart" (F4^{v}). This force of will, and the streak of latent sadism that accompanies it, is finally etched in the princess herself, in a brand that marks her as forever his:

> Yet this I am assur'de her Princely heart,
> where she hath lou'd wil neuer quite forget,
> I know in her I shal haue stil a part,
> in honest sort I know she loues me yet. (G3)

This is, I think, no small consolation—and it is one of immense empowerment for a frustrated subject. And, as Doran notes, it would have to do: "In November 1575 Elizabeth declined to accept the sovereignty of the Netherlands which had been offered to her by the States of the provinces, and over the next two years she consistently turned down their appeals for a military alliance."[154]

The Lady of May, 1578

I arrive finally at Philip Sidney's infamously obscure entry into the realm of literary politics: *The Lady of May*, performed at Leicester's newly-purchased manor of Wanstead in mid-May 1578. The themes of opposition, virility, and audacity pervade Sidney's literary debut—a reflection of three *further* years of disappointment and frustration with Elizabeth and her policy. (To remind: it was only two months earlier that Elizabeth had suddenly abandoned her long-promised, long-

[153] See Berry, *Of Chastity and Power,* p. 101; Doran, "Juno Versus Diana," p. 268.
[154] Doran, "Juno Versus Diana," p. 268.

delayed plans for direct intervention in the Low Countries, opting instead to fund the mercenary troops of Count Casimir—and in the process, robbing both Leicester and Sidney of their long-promised, long-delayed plans for military glory.) Though there are exceptionally few things that can be settled in this odd little show, I will argue one main point: the *affective* stakes of *The Lady of May* have not yet been accounted for, because we have not yet understood the precise implications of Sidney's adversarial mode.

Like many of the entertainments we've seen, *The Lady of May* begins with a spatial disruption, in which the boundaries of Wanstead's aristocratic frame are breached by a foreign presence. It was during a stroll through the manor's garden, just as Elizabeth "passed down into the grove," that

> there came suddenly among the train one apparelled like an honest man's wife of the country; where, crying out for justice, and desiring all the lords and gentlemen to speak a good word for her, she was brought to the presence of her Majesty.[155]

She falls in supplication, begging that the queen aid her in her plight. The point of contention, we've seen, is her daughter's two very different suitors, "both loving her, both equally liked of her, both striving to deserve her" (21.15; 19-20). But what might otherwise suggest a light interlude, we learn, has a more serious dimension:

> But now lastly (as this jealousy, forsooth, is a vile matter) each have brought their partakers with them, and are at this present, without your presence redress it, in some bloody controversy; my poor child is among them. (21.20-23)

The distraught mother points Elizabeth in the direction of the broil, praying that she might defuse the escalating tension and deliver her daughter to safety.

Though conflict is an integral part of Elizabethan pageantry, the combative elements often emerge (as we saw at Kenilworth and Woodstock) from a framework designed to contain, distance,

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[155] *The Lady of May,* p. 21, lines 1-5. In this section, citations to the performance will appear parenthetically in-text, abbreviated [*page.line*].

or soften the violence— such as the overt presence of allegorical, fantastical, or historical content, or the ritualized ceremony of the tournament tradition more generally.[156] But the clash at Wanstead entails a very real breach of the social order, recalling not the mythical battles of the earlier pageants, but the "controuersie between…wilde men" that plagued Fenton in Ireland.[157] Though these combatants, so apt for allegorization and abstraction, are not "realist" in any modern sense, they are still of a different order from dragons, faeries, and enchantresses—and as such, their conflict recalls the local feuds and personal conflicts that really did occupy the lords and justices of Elizabeth's realm, particularly in its frontiers. It is through this verisimilitude, ironically enough, that Sidney defuses much of the queen's symbolic majesty: even within the framework of monarchal deference, *The Lady of May* imagines (like the Sybil at Kenilworth) a space that is largely immune to the coercion of Elizabeth's social and symbolic authority, by creating a bathetic landscape that makes no attempt to soar to the aerial register of the (soon-to-be) Faerie Queen. To begin his pageant, Sidney announces Elizabeth's alienation from the playworld created in her honor, by staging a challenge to which she is fundamentally unsuited to respond: the symbolic body politic of Albion's warrior queen might be fit to parlay with Hercules and sylvan gods, but what could the body natural of a forty-five year old woman do to quell an outbreak of rustic gang warfare?

And the conflict is sudden: after the country lady departs, and before Elizabeth can proceed further, "there was heard in the woods a confused noise, and forthwith there came out six shepherds, with as many fosters, haling and pulling to whether side they should draw the Lady of

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[156] To be sure, such management strategies did nothing to make conventional tournament forms any safer for *participants*: I refer here to the ways that their symbolic meaning is processed for s*pectators*. Mock combat had high stakes, as Henry VIII of England would learn from several near disasters, and as Henri II of France would miss the opportunity to learn from further. But, in terms of formal conventions, the violence at Wanstead entailed an unexpected and jarring burst of verisimilitude, puncturing the usual fiction of ritualized combat.

[157] TNA, SP 63/124, fol. 158.

May, who seemed inclined neither to the one nor other side" (22.15-18). (Also amidst the fray is the comic schoolmaster Rhombus, an ancestor of Shakespeare's Holofernes, whose absurd commentary on the action is repaid in full with "many unlearned blows"—and who, I think, is intended to satirize the same spirit of pedantic intellectualism that underwrites many modern readings of the pageant [22.22].) The struggles are finally suspended at the sight of Elizabeth, and the young lady steps forward to unfold the opposition of Therion and Espilus. I now quote her appraisal in full:

> Espilus is the richer, but Therion the livelier. Therion doth me many pleasures, as stealing me venison out of these forests, and many other such like pretty and prettier service; but withal he grows to such rages, that sometimes he strikes me, sometimes he rails at me. This shepherd, Espilus, of a mild disposition, as his fortune hath not to do me great service, so hath he never done me any wrong; but feeding his sheep, sitting under some sweet bush, sometimes, they say, he records my name in doleful verses. (25.2-10)

Her dilemma, as posed to the queen, is "whether the many deserts and many faults of Therion, or the very small deserts and no faults of Espilus be to be preferred" (25.11-12).

Before adjudicating, Elizabeth is presented with several rounds of argument (by both the litigants and their seconds) on "whether the estate of shepherds or foresters were the more worshipful" (26.25-26). Espilus stresses both the abundance and ease of the shepherd's life, marked as it is by the "pasture rich, the wool as soft as silk"; he begs the lady to "Let not wild woods so great a treasure have" (26.9; 25.34). Therion, on the other hand, stresses the wild autonomy of a life unfettered by such objects:

> Two thousand deer in wildest woods I have,
> Them can I take, but you I cannot hold:
> He is not poor, who can his freedom save,
> Bound but to you, no wealth but you I would. (26.13-16)

After these opening statements, "the shepherds and foresters grew to a great contention whether of their fellows had sung better"; the shepherd Dorcas and the forester Rixus continue the verbal skirmish, debating the relative merits of their trade for a period much longer than the primary

rivals (26.23-34). As they see it, the distinctions between both suitor and vocation point to a fundamental divide in matters of temperament: Rixus is appalled that any would "liken Espilus, a shepherd, to Therion, of the noble vocation of huntsmen," while Dorcas equally refuses to "liken Therion to my boy Espilus, since one is a thievish prowler, and the other is as quiet as a lamb that new came from sucking" (27.13-14; 18-20). But while Dorcas will further extol this leisurely ease of the shepherd's life—whose contemplative eye is only "busied in considering the works of nature"—Rixus utilizes his rebuttal to extract the core of virtue from the pastoral life—discarding the yoke of potentially decadent otium that surrounds it—and identifies it as *already* a natural component of the active life:

> I was saying the shepherd's life had some goodness in it, because it borrowed of the country quietness something like ours. But that is not all; for ours, besides that quiet part, doth both strengthen the body, and raise up the mind with this gallant sort of activity. (28.14; 29.14-17)

With this rhetorical maneuver, the debates are brought to a close, and Elizabeth is granted the floor.

With good reason, readers of the pageant have often puzzled over Sidney's sympathies in the conflict, and virtually every possible permutation has been proposed. Some have argued that Sidney had no horse in this forensic race; Catherine Bates, for example, suggests that "the two suitors are in essence exactly the same," and that the impossibility of choosing between them signifies the "ultimate arbitrariness" of Elizabeth's power.[158] Duncan-Jones, we have seen, sees his allegiance as more pointed, claiming the pageant's design makes it "both apt and predicable that the Queen should choose Espilus, the inoffensive shepherd, rather than Therion, the active forester."[159] But Sidney is most often thought to side with the champion of the active life. This assumption underwrites several of the most influential readings of the pageant: Stephen Orgel, for example, argues that the gruff Therion still displays a sensitivity to the "contemplative virtues," obviating his

[158] Bates, *The Rhetoric of Courtship*, p. 63.

[159] Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet*, p. 149.

more limited rival, while Montrose similarly finds that "Sidney harmonizes action and contemplation in the forester's life," by moving "the audience from a situation of indecision between two antithetical extremes to a realignment that shows one term to incorporate, revise, and transcend the other."[160] With Therion thus associated with the interests of Sidney, Leicester, and the more actively-inclined Protestant party, he becomes, in many such readings, an advocate for the author's position on any number of topical issues, such intervention in the Netherlands, the royal favor owed to Leicester, or Sidney's desire to take a more rigorous role in English politics.

As is, I'm sure, quite clear, I too associate Sidney and Leicester with the virile, aggressive, and autonomous energy of the wild forester Therion, for the reasons that have been enumerated in this chapter. But the import of this association may have a different valence than has been usually understood, and it is one that is best exemplified by how Elizabeth elected to resolve the conflict. After the conclusion of the debate, the lady begs Elizabeth to make her selection, with a final proviso that "in judging me, you judge more than me in it" (30.11-12). The queen's decision, however, is recorded by Sidney in a maddeningly truncated response: "This being said, it pleased her Majesty to judge that Espilus did the better deserve her; but what words, what reasons she used for it, this paper, which carrieth so base names, is not worthy to contain." This outcome, unsurprisingly, has elicited even more critical puzzlement: if Sidney built the superior case for Therion, what do we make of his defeat? Some, like Orgel, have viewed the outcome as a disastrous mistake—the Queen, perhaps not paying full attention to the pageant's subtleties, simply assumed that "shepherds are the heroes of pastoral"—while others, like Montrose, suggest the queen's decision was purposeful and deliberate, entailing a "conscious and pointed rejection of Sidney's

[160] S. K. Orgel, "Sidney's Experiment in Pastoral: The Lady of May," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 26 (1964): 202; Louis Adrian Montrose, "Celebration and Insinuation: Sir Philip Sidney and the Motives of Elizabethan Courtship," *Renaissance Drama* 8 (1977): 18.

pastoral paradigm for the just and temperate relationship that should obtain between freeborn English gentlemen and their sovereign."[161]

But to return at last to Duncan-Jones's central question: is it reasonable to think that Sidney would have expected his virgin queen to sentence the May Lady to an outlaw life, made only worse by regular beatings? Probably not. Yet there can be no denying, as we have seen in this chapter, that Leicester and Sidney consciously and deliberately associated themselves with the forces of wildness in the pageantry they sponsored. As Edward Berry has persuasively argued, the May Day context suggests (or perhaps insists) that Therion is the pageant's folk champion: it is he, not the gentle shepherd, who must preside over the day's celebration of virility and misrule.[162] For the traditional May King is none other than Robin Hood: a man who, like Therion, famously boasts to "*lyve by our kynges dere*."[163] As *de facto* ruler of Wanstead's symbolic frame, this Robin is an apt guise for he who rules its literal one: Robin Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Leicester's association with the forester figure is made further explicit by the pageant's epilogue, in which Leicester ("Master Robert of Wanstead") is ironically imagined as a "huge *catholicam*," praying to the Virgin Elizabeth on a pair of "Papistian beads" (31.28; 30). This bizarre moment, like so many others in the pageant, is difficult to assess. It is perhaps most commonly read (though I'm not sure rightly) as "Dudley's decisive abdication from the king-game"; it is also possible to read the image wickedly, insofar as Leicester accepting Elizabeth's rejection humbly is about as likely as him turning to the Pope. But one thing is clear: it quite explicitly transforms the defeated Leicester into a hermit-figure, the

[161] Orgel, "Sidney's Experiment," p. 202; Montrose, "Celebration and Insinuation," p. 20.
[162] See Berry, "Sidney's May Game for the Queen," *in passim.*
[163] Dobson and Taylor, *Rymes*, p. 106 (italics in original).

malcontent of the wild.[164] This precise image is deployed by Cooper, to culminate his ode on the forester's retirement:

> Now will I take to me my bed*es*
> for and my sant*es* booke.
> And pray I wyll for them *that* may
> for I may nowght but loke.
> yet ha*ue I bene a foster.* [165]

Leicester is a disappointed hermit, and disappointed hermits are retired foresters.[166] Given the entire network of associations, it seems impossible *not* to read Therion is a proxy for Leicester.

We are left, then, with granting Duncan-Jones's premise, but radically inverting the conclusion we draw from it. Therion *is* an unlikely winner in this contest, but this does not, in turn, mean that he lacks the author's sympathies: rather, it reveals that Sidney was willing to cast his uncle in a losing role, and accordingly dictate the terms of the inevitable rejection. As in the other pageants, *The Lady of May* insistently asserts the benefits of the forester's life, which in its wildness valorizes notions of virility, aggression, self-sufficiency, and autonomy. In the foresters, Sidney presents an antisocial community of outlaw hunters, a site of fantasy identification that could not possibly be accommodated within the Elizabethan symbolic order. As such, the (anti)sociality of the "wild fool" inherently threatens the more pliant community of the "sheepish dolt"—a community which is, as Dorcas himself reveals, simply a reconfiguration of the conventional courtly world:

> How many courtiers, think you, I have heard under our field in bushes make their woeful complaints, some of the greatness of their mistress' estate, which dazzled their eyes and yet burned their hearts...[,] making our vales witnesses of their doleful agonies! So that with long lost labour, finding their thoughts bare no other wool but despair, of young courtiers they grew old shepherds. (28.18-26)

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[164] Marie Axton, "The Tudor Mask and Elizabethan Court Drama," in *English Drama: Forms and Development*, ed. Marie Axton and Raymond Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 37ff, for the preceding quotation and further discussion of the conversion.

[165] BL, Additional MS 31922, fol. 66.

[166] Or, as with Hemetes, a retired knight—a figure equally virile and active.

Despite attempts to differentiate between the young courtier and the despairing shepherd, they are still creatures of the same order. By embracing this form of retirement, the ex-courtier remains bound, sheep-like, to the same symbolic system that he attempts to flee; pastoral retreat is rendered harmless, a benign form of opposition that is anticipated, accommodated, and underwritten by the larger terms of the bond of courtship. As Rixus rebuts, to become truly unfettered from the courtly world, one must go off the grid entirely, by embracing the virtue and freedom of the wild:

> O sweet contentation, to see the long life of the hurtless trees; see how in straight growing up, though never so high, they hinder not their fellows; they only enviously trouble, which are crookedly bent….We have no hopes, but we may quickly go about them, and going about them, we soon obtain them [the *hopes*]; not like those that, having long followed one (in truth) most excellent chase, do now at length perceive she could never be taken. (29.18-25)

For Sidney and his party, this is a site of affective redemption, home to an antisocial community that draws collective strength from its outcast status. The very identity of this subculture is *premised* on rejection, which is again reimagined as a badge of honor.

David Alwes, in his provocative reading, suggests that "failure was *inscribed*" in *The Lady of May*—and to a point, I agree, insofar as Sidney could hardly expect Elizabeth to choose the suitor in which his own identity was invested.[167] Yet in the larger sense, I am arguing that it was even more impossible for Sidney to lose: by choosing Therion, Elizabeth publically endorses Sidney, and co-signs his party's temperament, and by choosing Espilus (as she did), she ascribes to them an outsider status that they have already prepared to embrace, and which they have already primed as a site of psychic and social empowerment. The oppositional dynamics of wildness, quite ironically, make *The Lady of May* a very accommodating play: a fact confirmed by its baffling conclusion, a

[167] Alwes, *Sons and Authors*, p. 70 (italics in original).

song in which the winner Espilus (possibly in duet with Therion) tells "two short tales" in praise of the wild agenda.[168] They are both worth quoting in full:

> Silvanus long in love, and long in vain,
> At length obtained the point of his desire,
> When being asked, now that he did obtain
> His wished weal, what more he could require:
> 'Nothing,' said he 'for most I joy in this,
> That goddess mine, my blessed being sees.'
>
> When wanton Pan, deceived with lion's skin,
> Came to the bed, where wound for kiss he got,
> To woe and shame the wretch did enter in,
> Till this he took, for comfort of his lot:
> 'Poor Pan', he said, 'although thou beaten be,
> It is no shame, since Hercules was he.'

Officially, Espilus's song is said to be "tending to the greatness of his own joy, and yet to the comfort of the other side," but this can hardly be taken at face value: the first ditty tells of the forest god's erotic triumph, and the second of the shepherd god being assaulted by the wild man's legendary form. Clearly the song is meant to champion the spirit of Therion, in a way too forceful to be conciliatory—but this does *not* necessarily mean, as is usually claimed, that Sidney *expected* his forester to be crowned victor. As we've seen, there is another way that Sidney might have managed the fortunes of his litigants. This ode to wildness was likely sung, despite Therion's defeat: anticipated by the pageant's architect, Sylvanus and Hercules are finally vindicated, even in the face of public rejection.

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[168] *The Lady of May*, p. 30.21ff. for what follows. The precise attribution of this song is baffling. Neither the original printed text (in the 1598 edition of the *Arcadia*) nor the sole independent manuscript witness give any sense that the speech was divided—yet the concluding lines contain an internal division ("Thus joyful I in chosen tunes rejoice….. Thus woeful I in woe this salve do find") that seems to suggest that both Therion and Espilus participated. Duncan-Jones and Van Dorsten, going further, attribute the entire second tale to Therion. See Robert Kimbrough and Philip Murphy, "The Helmingham Hall Manuscript of Sidney's the Lady of May: A Commentary and Transcription," *Renaissance Drama* 1 (1968): 103-19.

IN FROM THE WILD

If *The Lady of May* provided an affective boost for the Leicester/Sidney party, it would have been a much needed one: the early months of 1578 did not bode well for those of their persuasion, and things would continue to degrade as the year unfolded. Interventionist fantasies of military glory remained spoiled by Elizabeth's pledge to Casimir; to make matters worse, Elizabeth had recently reopened marriage negotiations with Francis, Duke of Anjou and Alençon, brother to the French king—a suitor who provoked widespread disdain in both court and country, but perhaps most of all to men like Leicester and Sidney. The frustration I have discussed throughout this chapter—which, refined through a community of opposition, might be called upon as a source of political strength—was hardening into despair, and resistance to the queen's will seemed increasingly futile. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that during the queen's summer progress in 1578, the pageantry she witnessed (with which Leicester seems to have had at least some connection), took on a rather different tone. In these performances, Queen Elizabeth is praised in wildly new terms:

> Who ever found on earth a constant friend,
> That may compare with this my Virgin Queene?
> Whoever found a body and a mynde
> So free from staine, so perfect to be seene,
> Oh heavenly hewe, that aptest is to soyle,
> And yet doste live from blot of any foyle![169]

Just a few years earlier the nymph Zabetha was indicted for this very disposition, and the queen herself was begged to counteract the ruin it had brought to Leicester's world. But here, in a stunning reversal, Elizabeth's state of unmatched matrimony is reimagined as a reflection of her unmatched virtue. Only a few months later, Colin Clout, the Elizabethan poet shepherd *par*

[169] Nichols, *Progresses*, 2:163.

excellence, would famously glorify the virgin queen Eliza in the April eclogue of Spenser's *Shepheardes Calendar*—the literary milestone that triumphantly welcomed the pastoral mode to the repertoire of courtly figuration.

This shift in emphasis would have drastic implications for the future of Elizabethan representation: "The Norwich entertainments of August 1578," Susan Doran observes, "were the first recorded public occasion where the appearance of the cult of the Virgin Queen can be seen."[170] This cult, it seems, emerged from a Hail Mary attempt to thwart the undesirable match with Alençon—an attempt that was ultimately vindicated, insofar as Elizabeth was finally forced to concede, in 1579, that the would-be nuptials evoked too much ill will to proceed. (Though talks would linger for years to come.) But before long, the image of Gloriana would be ruthlessly seized upon by Elizabeth herself—who, in an ironically familiar maneuver, refined this site of opposition into a reservoir of enormous power, from which she fueled the machines of orthodoxy that would dominate her reign's second half. This system of representation, Montrose observes, "may have had its origins in symbolic resistance to the royal will": but in its "exorbitant final phrase, this resonant nexus of images was instrumental to the interests of the monarch and her increasingly authoritarian and isolated regime."[171]

This transition, finally, would go on to uproot the spatial order itself. It is no coincidence, I think, that pastoralism achieves dominance as a courtly mode precisely as Elizabeth is asserting new mastery over her own symbolic representation; as revealed by the conflict of Therion and Espilus, staged in the midst of this very transformation, the sad songs of the pasture pose little threat to the pillars of orthodoxy. The call of the wild, however, was a different thing entirely.

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[170] Doran, "Juno Versus Diana," p. 272. In *The Lady of May,* Elizabeth's virginity is emphasized (though perhaps not celebrated) by Leicester's mock-worship; for discussion, see Montrose, "Gifts and Reasons: The Contexts of Peele's *Araygnement of Paris*," *ELH* 47 (1980): 443.

[171] Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender, and Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 70.

Under her watchful eye, Elizabeth would happily let her courtiers sulk in the pasture, provided they remain away from the treeline; by authorizing pastoralism as her court's official mode of disaffection, and channeling oppositionality as such, she clear-cut the wilds of her symbolic realm, claiming for her own the former site of antisociality. And for letting Elizabeth into the wild, her courtiers had no one to blame but themselves: by thrusting upon her the mantle of a virgin queen, they equally enshrined her as the master-huntress Diana.

To be sure, the spirit of wildness was not expelled from Elizabethan literature, and we need only turn to *The Arcadia* or *The Faerie Queene* to encounter foresters, savage men, and various denizens of the wild. But there is a reason why Philip Sidney is not known as the Forester Knight, and there is a reason why pastoralism, in the 1580s and 1590s, becomes the dominant mode of courtly negotiation: the pasture was the site of courtly opposition compatible with the new symbolic order Elizabeth had installed, and it was the site toward which frustrated courtiers (and frustrated would-bes) like Sidney and Spenser were herded.[172] The consequence of this literary regime change appeared almost immediately: George Peele's *Araygnment of Paris* (c. 1581; pub. 1584), the first major pastoral entertainment of the 1580s, bears little resemblance to the pageants sponsored by Sidney and Leicester in the 1570s. In this performance, Elizabeth's mastery of the fictive scene is undisputed:

> Entertainments such as those sponsored by the Earl of Leicester at Kenilworth and Wanstead in the 1570's ostensibly offered a choice to the Queen but it was one in which the options were skewed against female independence or dominion….*The Araygnement of Paris* is typical of royal entertainments in its hyperbolic treatment

[172] A separate, but related point: there is a reason why a genuine georgic mode never developed in Elizabethan England. The fundamental georgic impulse—man's attempt to impose his mastery on the world—may have been forestalled by the apotheosis of the Gloriana thematics: the Elizabethan Arcadia arrived, fully formed, as the enforced domain for courtiers who themselves had no interest in relinquishing their wildness. On the complex issue of georgics in early modern English literature, see for example, Anthony Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) and Alastair Fowler, "The Beginning of English Georgic," in *Renaissance Genres,* ed. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 105-25.

> of the royal spectator and her fictional personae. But it differs from many of the entertainments of the previous two decades in that it fully acknowledges and celebrates the Queen's own choice, her complex transcendence of the simplistic oppositions contrived by her courtiers.[173]

What has not been adequately recognized is the spatial politics that underwrites this transformation. Montrose is surely correct in suggesting that pastoralism was "an authorized mode of discontent" in the Elizabethan court, and thus not "a critique made in terms of a consciously articulated oppositional culture."[174] The discourse of wildness, however, *did* enable such an oppositional (counter)culture, at a time when many Elizabethan courtiers was increasingly alienated by their queen's policy—and at a time, in the 1570s, when there was still a place for such pricklier disaffection. If the golden age of Elizabethan letters arrived with the *Shepherdes Calendar* in 1579, then the years prior, in which the pageants of Sidney and Leicester found affective strength in the politics of rejection, were something of a literary frontier. This contextual novelty demands, as I have tried to show in this chapter, that these entertainments be considered in their own right, rather than (as is often the case) simply precursors to *The Arcadia* and *The Faerie Queene*, the presumed sites of real interest.

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But that doesn't mean there's nothing for us there. In the early cantos of *The Faerie Queene*'s fourth book, a grand tournament is organized by the noble Satyrane—the half-satyr hero who tamed his innate savagery to join the fraternity of virtuous knights. Throughout the tourney, Satyrane fares exceptionally well, until the arrival of an unknown figure:

> Till that there entred on the other side,
> A straunger knight, from whence no man could reed,
> In quyent disguise, full hard to be descride.
> For all his armour was like saluage weed,
> With woody mosse bedight, and all his steed

[173] Montrose, "Contexts," p. 444.

[174] Montrose, "Of Gentlemen and Shepherds," p. 427.

> With oaken leaues attrapt, that seemed fit
> For saluage wight, and thereto well agreed
> His word, which on his ragged shield was writ,
> *Saluagesse sans finesse*, shewing secret wit.[175]

This savage man unleashes a frenzied attack on the other competitors, singlehandedly routing the field before the awed spectators. Satyrane, who had forsaken the woods for the civil world, is defeated by a foe whose engagement with the wild is absolute.

Who is this brutal knight, who dispatched his adversaries so completely? The narrator delivers us from uncertainty:

> Much wondred all men, what, or whence he came,
> That did amongst the troupes so tyrannize;
> And each of other gan inquire his name.
> But when they could not learne it by no wize,
> Most answerable to his wyld disguize
> It seemed, him to terme the saluage knight.
> But certes his right name was otherwize,
> Though knowne to few, that *Arthegall* he hight,
> The doughtiest knight that liv'd that day, and most of might.[176]

Long before he was half-sad, the knight of justice understood the attraction of savagery. Like Leicester and Sidney, he was charged with protecting the realm of the Faerie Queene—and like Leicester and Sidney, he understood that sometimes it required stepping outside of it entirely.

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[175] Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, IV.iv.39.

[176] Ibid., IV.iv.42.

Chapter 4: The Emotional Practice of *Dread*: The Earl of Essex and the 1590s

"Res est solliciti plena timoris amor."[1] So says Ovid's grief-struck Penelope, in a phrase often poached by Renaissance humanists, as she pleads for news of her husband's wandering fleet, long tormented by the vengeful winds of fortune.[2] In the middle of July 1597, the sixty-three-year-old Queen Elizabeth I was similarly beset with anxious fear, and similarly watched the sea for a sign of her beloved. Only days before, the most worthy men of her realm had set a triumphant course for Spain, intent on relieving the arch-tyrant Philip II of both his navy and his colonial plunder; the voyage was commanded by royal favorite Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, the man who had assumed the place in Elizabeth's heart once held by his stepfather, the great Earl of Leicester.[3] But fate was cruel to the English fleet. Shortly after its departure, both land and sea had quaked with "an extreame storme which lasted afore and after six dayes": the "leke wether at this tyme of the yere," exclaimed Admiral Thomas Howard, vice-admiral of the enterprise, "was never cene by man."[4]

The queen's love for her peers (and the soldiers they commanded) was not conjugal, and her suffering paled beside Penelope's years of torment—but this mattered little at the

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[1] "Love is a thing full of anxious fear." Ovid, *Heroides*, ed. Arthur Palmer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), Ep. 1, line 12.

[2] It appears, for example, in the familiar letters of both Erasmus and the Huguenot diplomat Hubert Languet (writing here to Sidney, incidentally). See *The Epistles of Erasmus,* ed. Francis Morgan Nichols (London, 1901), p. 141, and *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, ed. Steuart Adolphus Pears (London, 1845), p. 3.

[3] On this, the so-called "Islands Voyage," see Richard Bruce Wernham, *The Return of The Armadas: The Last Years of the Elizabethan War Against Spain, 1595-1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), Chap. XII.

[4] TNA, SP 12/264, fol. 51; CP 33/49.

time, as Elizabeth anxiously awaited word of the "storme beaten fleet."[5] When it finally came, the news was better than expected: though bruised and battered, and thwarted in their aims, her ships had reached safe harbor, a miraculous arrival under fortune's guiding hand. The queen was especially relieved to learn of Essex, whose vessel had staggered to port "in great extremetye & imminent perrill of sinkinge in the sea"; upon hearing of his return, the earl was later told," the wattr came plentiful out of her eyes."[6] For Essex, however, there was little time for celebration. He still had a war to wage, and a fleet to reassemble:

> Since my last I am remoued from Fawmouth to Pli*m*math, a most toylesu*m*m jorney, but such as I cold nott forbear, because I must seeke to gather my scattered flock. I haue found S*i*r W*alte*r, S*i*r Fra*ncis* Vere, S*i*r G*eorge* Care, S*i*r W*illia*m Haruy, and Cap*tain* Throgmorton, w*i*th 4 of the q*ueen*s great shippes heere.

"I mett w*i*th S*i*r W*illiam* Brooke and S*i*r Ferd*inando* Gorge," Essex continues, "in the Drednought," as plans were hatched to set sail again.[7]

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"The rise of English naval mastery," writes Geoffrey Parker, "may be said to have started with the launch of the *Dreadnought*, the first 'all big-gun battleship,' in 1573."[8] A vessel of very "neere twenty saile" and over forty guns, the *Dreadnought* was among the first experimental designs of master shipwright Matthew Baker, the man whose technical

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[5] TNA, SP 12/264, fol. 46.

[6] TNA, SP 12/264, fol. 56; CP 33/49. Before his departure, Elizabeth had warned Essex to "truste not to the grace of your crased vessell, that to the ocean maye fortune be to humble" (TNA, SP 12/264, fol. 19^{v}).

[7] TNA, 12/264, fol. 57.

[8] Geoffrey Parker, "The *Dreadnought* Revolution of Tudor England," *Mariner's Mirror* 82 (1996): 286.

genius would revolutionize the warships of the Elizabethan Navy.[9] As "the most gifted shipwright of his age," Baker initiated a paradigm shift in nautical design; in his hands, the discipline of shipmaking (revealed by an innovative use of blueprints and formulaic procedures) became a tool of enormous imaginative dexterity, freeing the architect from the laborious task of managing adjustments at the site of construction.[10] Under his direction, English warships were equipped with a longer gun deck and sleeker lines (the "race-built" style), an optimization with results that seemed fantastical: Elizabeth's navy could now carry heavier, more devastating artillery, *and* do so with greater precision and finesse. The *Dreadnought*'s relative ordinance capacity was unprecedented, and before long new ships were commissioned and old ships were retrofitted to her design. It was with this technical mastery, fifteen years later, that the English captains "completely thwarted Phillip II's design to invade and conquer the realm, and drove the Armada into ignominious flight back to Spain."[11] It is with good reason, then, that Parker speaks of the rise of English naval supremacy as "the *Dreadnought* Revolution of Tudor England."

But in the bone-shaking storm of July 1597, the *Dreadnought* may have had some trouble living up to its name—at least, that is, if we are to go by the accounts of the unlucky sailors, paralyzed with dread as the heavens crashed down upon them. Sir William Brooke, the *Dreadnought*'s commander in the action, sent rueful report of the "distres and harmes receaued by this late tempest"; "euery one," he admitted, "complain of to be in his ship."[12]

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[9] Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes In Fiue Bookes* (London, 1625), p. 1950.
[10] The quote is from James McDermott's *ODNB* entry.
[11] Parker, "*Dreadnought* Revolution," p. 271; 269.
[12] TNA, SP 12/264, fol. 58.

Others in the fleet were more forthcoming about the dire experience of braving the storm. As Sir Walter Raleigh describes it, the conditions on his *Warspite* were dreadful indeed:

> in my shipp it hath shaken all her beams, knees & stanchyng well in a sunder, in so mich as on Saterday night last wee made accompt to have yeelded our seules vp to god, for wee had no way to worke ether by triinge, hollinge, or drivinge *tha*t p*ro*mised better hope, our men beinge washe w*i*th labor & watchynge & our shipp so open every wher all her bulk head rent & her verye cookrome of brike sshaken down in to powder.[13]

In one of his most powerful early poems, the young John Donne similarly recalls the horrific scene:

> Lightning was all our light, and it rain'd more
> Than if the Sunne had drunke the sea before;
> Some coffin'd in their cabbins lye, 'equally
> Griev'd that they are not dead, and yet must dye.
> And as sin-burd'ned souls from graves will creepe,
> At the last day, some forth their cabbins peepe.

"Compar'd to these stormes," Donne reveals, death seemed "but a qualme," and the desperate crew could not manage "to feare away feare" in the face of oblivion.[14]

But for a man like Essex, whose sense of self (perhaps even more than that of Sidney and Leicester) was built on fantasies of martial glory, it was not even this threat of destruction that summoned feelings of dread: on the contrary, it was the intolerable thought that he would be barred from fulfilling the promise of his generalship, and that King Philip would escape a crippling defeat. When the fate of Essex was still unknown, Raleigh worried that "ether my L*ord* Generall hyme sealf will wrestell w*i*th the seas to his perrill, or constrayned to cu*m* bake, be fovnd vtterly heartbroken"—despite the fact that, as all would

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[13] Ibid., fol. 46.

[14] "The Storme," lines 43-48; 65; 52 in John Donne, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. C.A. Patrides (London: Everyman, 1985). A year before, Donne had also served with Essex in the more successful raid on Cadiz.

readily admit, "it be not in the powre of man to fight agaynst ellements."[15] The earl's return confirmed the latter suspicion, as Raleigh would shortly inform the council:

> S*i*r I beseich yow to worke from her Maiestye summe cu*m*fort to my L*ord* generall, who I know is dismayd by thes mischaunces, eeven to death, although ther could not be more dvn by any man vppon the yearth, God havinge turned the heavens w*i*th *tha*t fury against vs, a matter beyovnd the power or valure or witt of man to resiste.[16]

Essex was devastated by the initial setback of his command. He would quickly rally, and put to sea again, but the expedition that unfolded proved even more disastrous. This campaign, usually known today as the "Islands Voyage," was the final major military action of Elizabeth's reign. Less than four years later, Essex would lose his head at the queen's command.

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To conclude my dissertation, this chapter is an attempt to understand the emotional characteristics of the late Elizabethan courtly sphere; my focus is the Earl of Essex and his followers, who in early 1601 took to the streets of London, in an armed uprising that would go down in history as the last major political crisis of Queen Elizabeth's long and glorious reign. What affective state, I ask, drove Essex and his men to such a desperate action, and how did it emerge from the increasingly ruthless courtly experience of the decade that preceded it? We have seen how, in the middle years of Elizabeth's reign, a series of shared political frustrations led to the creation of certain emotional communities at court; in the 1590s, as Elizabeth's death loomed and England's future hung uncertainly, the value of such

[15] TNA, SP 12/264, fol. 46v.

[16] Ibid., fol. 56.

alliances would only intensify, transforming court into a factional battlefield.[17] This deep uncertainty about the future set Elizabeth's courtiers against each other, in a struggle to assert their own will in the face of oblivion. Essex was the key player in this conflict, which ultimately cost him his life.

My approach to Essex emerges from a robust body of archival material, including a core of unpublished manuscript documents that has (to my knowledge) not been employed in the context of literary studies. To guide my analysis of this data, I organize my thinking around the affective category of *dread*: an emotional practice that was, I suggest, central to the late Elizabethan court, and central to the late Elizabethan experience more generally. Emerging from the context of religious devotion, dread may be seen as a hierarchical affect, a terror or anxiety that acknowledges the other's mastery: dread is the fearful reverence that the creation owes his creator, or that the subject owes his sovereign, or that the sailor owes the tempest, precisely because of the categorical distinction between the two. *To dread* is to fear that which is earthshaking, that which is rupturing, that which is mindbending; it is fear, no doubt, but it is a fear that acknowledges domination, or the potentiality of *being* dominated. I think that the emotional experience of Elizabeth's final decade was flooded with such fears, and that the bizarre career of the Earl of Essex demonstrates the variety of domains upon which they impinged.

More specifically, I argue that species of dread can be detected across the cosmic hierarchy of late Elizabethan England, each directed toward that which might irrevocably alter the shape of the conceptual frame in which it operates. Because of large scale political

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[17] On "emotional communities," in a very different historical context, see Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

and cultural crises—such as the aging queen's unsettled succession, persistent threats of foreign invasion, and widespread religious agitation—many Elizabethans feared that the world as they knew it would imminently tear asunder; this *cosmic dread* was a perennial feature of life in the 1590s, equally suited for both prince and pauper. In the courtly sphere—the center of power, and the center of my focus in this chapter—this general affective atmosphere led to the intensification of rivalrous, violent conflicts; the factionalism that plagued the late Elizabethan court thus gave rise to a *social dread,* as men like Essex and his enemies each struggled to assert their own mastery and subjugate their opponents. With the court's social hierarchy in flux, the competition was particularly grinding: courtiers and their adversaries found themselves simultaneously feared *and* fearing, each trying to dominate the other and secure the favor of their queen. It is this affective contest—in which, we will see, the production and circulation of literary texts proved crucial—that defined the courtly experience of the 1590s, and that ultimately drove the Earl of Essex to his infamous, desperate action. But the aftermath of the Essex rising reveals a final form of dread, in which the disgraced earl was forced to account for his own place in the world crumbling around him: in this *inner dread*, devotion comes back to the forefront, as the condemned man learns to fear not the God who shakes worlds, but the God who absolves the wretched sinner. In his final days, Essex commits fully to the affective resolution of atonement, embracing a dread of the creator who would soon receive his soul.

This taxonomy is loose, of course; consistent with the approach of this dissertation more generally, my goal is not to historicize dread *per se*. I use the notion heuristically, as a way of thinking about the larger emotional climate that presided over Elizabeth's final years, and as a way of guiding the presentation of my data. I do think, however, that the rise

and fall of the Earl of Essex shows the variety of emotional contexts in which such dreadful fears occurred, and it shows how such fears would irrevocably alter the final years of the Tudor dynasty. By unpacking the evidence surrounding Essex's political fortunes, I hope to reconstruct something of this affective experience, in which a series of nested fears and anxieties infected moods both public and private. To conclude my study of emotion in the Tudor court, I consider how dreadful a place it must have been.

THE LAST FAVORITE

The man who became Elizabeth's final favorite was the eldest son of Walter Devereux, first Earl of Essex (1539-1576), a royal servant whose short life (as both private investor and government agent) was consumed with the task of colonizing the intractable Irish frontier.[18] At his father's death in 1576, the young Robert Devereux inherited his earldom at the age of eleven; his mother Lettice secretly married the Earl of Leicester in 1578, and after several years of travel and study Essex joined his stepfather at court in 1585. Later that year Essex followed Leicester to the Low Countries, as part of the English military effort to support continental Protestantism. Essex was granted the prestigious command of the cavalry, and he saw action at both Doesburg and Zutphen; throughout the campaign, he displayed the rash courage that would become his martial trademark. He returned to England a rising star, backed by Leicester's unequalled influence; soon

[18] For the account of Essex's life, see Paul E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) [hereafter *PEP*] and Hammer's entry on Essex in the *ODNB.* It is rare that a single scholar so thoroughly dominates a subject as Hammer does modern research on Essex; my debt to his work is profound.

afterward he was knighted, and in 1587 was granted his stepfather's former post as Master of the Horse.

In 1588 Leicester's sudden death left a vacuum at court. Though Essex would eventually inherit his stepfather's role as chief favorite, his triumph at court was not immediate, and in the final years of the decade he jockeyed for position with men like Raleigh. In 1590 Essex infuriated the queen by secretly marrying Frances Walsingham, daughter of secretary of state Francis Walsingham and widow of Sir Philip Sidney. But the queen's anger was only temporary, and in 1591 Essex was granted formal command of his first military campaign, an expedition designed to aid the French King Henri IV against encroaching Catholic forces; the action was a failure, however, and the demoralized Essex returned to court in January 1592, determined to become more involved in directing matters of state. It was at this time that he began to assemble a formidable circle of secretaries and agents, the seeds of what would become the Essex faction. Essex focused on gathering intelligence and bolstering influence on the Continent, secure in his commitment to direct military engagement with Catholic Spain.

In 1596 Essex took co-command of the English assault on the Spanish port of Cadiz. After destroying the meager defenses, Essex led a successful land assault on the city, with his characteristic blend of rashness and bravery. (Though in the fray, the Spanish managed to burn a fleet filled with New World treasure that would have otherwise fallen into English hands.) After the daring capture of Cadiz, the crowning achievement of the earl's military career, he returned home to popular acclaim. Elizabeth, however, was far less pleased with the affair, which ultimately yielded small profit and little military advantage. While Essex was in Cadiz, his enemy Robert Cecil had been appointed Secretary of State, and the earl

now saw his influence waning with Elizabeth. To make matters worse, his next military command (the so-called "islands voyage," with which I started this chapter) was an unmitigated failure. After plans to capture and garrison the Spanish port of Ferrol were spoiled by the monstrous weather, Essex diverted the remaining fleet to the Azores, with the slim hope of intercepting a returning transport of Spanish treasure. This gamble failed by an agonizingly narrow margin, and Essex returned to England with little to show but a damaged reputation.

Though Essex still enjoyed both favor and influence with the queen, the failed excursion of 1597 marked a turning point in his career, which would steadily decline until its infamous end. In late 1598, he received a final chance to achieve the military glory he had so long sought: he was named Lord Lieutenant of the English expedition to Ireland, an army charged with suppressing the rebel chieftain Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone. In the spring of the following year, he landed in Dublin, prepared to settle matters with a quick, decisive victory—but the grim Irish terrain made a direct assault impossible, and he spent the next several months meandering through Ireland in a series of costly, minor excursions. Distanced from court, Essex became increasingly concerned about the situation at home, convinced that Cecil and his allies were working secretly on behalf of Spanish interests. In August 1599, he briefly considered leading his army back into England to confront his enemies directly, an act of treason that was prevented by his advisors. The desperate Essex met privately with Tyrone in September, where he engineered a makeshift, temporary truce with the rebel. Despite explicit orders to the contrary, he immediately left for London, where he infamously barged into the chamber of a half-dressed queen.

In light of his erratic behavior and unauthorized return, Essex was soon taken into custody; for the next several months, he was confined to York House as the Privy Council debated his conduct in Ireland. His political enemies, such as Cecil, Raleigh, and Attorney General Edward Coke, worked tirelessly to prepare a treason case against him, alleging that Essex was secretly in league with Tyrone and had long desired to usurp the throne. The earl, however, maintained his popularity, and retained no small hold over Elizabeth; the Queen eventually loosened the terms of his imprisonment, and spared him the ignominy of a public trial. On 5 June 1600, a special inquiry was empanelled at York House, where his performance in Ireland was denounced. Though he escaped the charge of treason, it had a heavy cost: Essex was stripped of all royal appointments and remained a prisoner of the Queen.

Though eventually released from custody, Essex was forever banished from court, with little to show for his years of service but a mound of debt. (For their part, his enemies would continue to amass evidence in the hope of future indictments.) In October Elizabeth revoked the earl's customary lease on sweetwine (the lynchpin of his income), destroying any hope of recovery. Essex and his followers grew evermore disaffected; the earl was desperate to secure both himself and his country from the enemies who, he was certain, were pushing Elizabeth and her succession closer to Spain. With the new year, Essex and his closest advisors fell to increasingly drastic measures: only direct action, they concluded, could free Elizabeth from the likes of Cecil and Raleigh. Throughout January, a plan evolved: Essex and a group of sympathetic nobles would make their way into the queen's presence, where they would (with all reverence) expose her ministers for their corruption.

On Saturday, 7 February 1601, Essex and his followers were pushed to action: that afternoon, Essex was instructed to appear before the Privy Council. Smelling a trap, and heeding rumors that Raleigh sought his life, Essex refused the order, as he and his confidants scrambled to put their premature plans into action. (In a much discussed event, several of his allies had that afternoon attended a specially-commissioned performance of Shakespeare's *Richard II*, a play ominously concerned with royal deposition.) The next morning, an embassy from the Privy Council called on Essex in person; in the ensuing scuffle, the councilors were imprisoned in Essex House, while Essex and his roughly 300 followers set off, armed but not armored. Banking on his popularity, Essex decided first to appeal to London before engaging the Queen herself. His men marched through the streets, proclaiming that they came only in self-defense, intending to forestall a plot against the earl. The action, however, was a disaster: the townspeople didn't rise to his aid, and the Privy Council had preempted the mob's arrival, alerting several of London's key officials. The city gates were shut, streets were blocked, and a counterforce was deployed; Essex and his ever-shrinking company narrowly escaped by boat to Essex House, where the earl soon surrendered both himself and the Privy Council hostages.

The fallout of the uprising was immediate. In the Star Chamber, Essex and his followers were denounced by members of the Privy Council; in London, they were (by official instruction) denounced from the pulpit. On 19 February Essex and co-conspirator Henry Wriothsley, Earl of Southampton were found guilty of treason, for open rebellion and seeking the lives of the Council members. Though Southampton was spared, Essex was executed at the Tower six days later.

COSMIC DREAD

The spectacular fall of the Earl of Essex, a self-destruction underwritten by the combined operation of fear and desperation, is something of an index to the social and political atmosphere that settled over England in the final years of Elizabeth's reign. It was a terrible time for England more generally, quite apart from the courtly intrigue at the center of power: as all Elizabethans were aware, the queen was creeping towards the grave, the realm lacked an heir, and unrest at both home and abroad threatened the very existence of their nation. In both court and country, dread was perhaps the defining affective mode of the 1590s, and it was in these dreadful times that Essex emerged as England's most formidable courtier. To understand the political struggle for dread in the courtly sphere, we must first understand more broadly the cultural sphere of dread by which it was encompassed.

This cultural significance begins with the word itself. Despite today's more casual usage, *dread* in the early modern period was not simply a synonym of *fear*, a fact indicated by the theological context in which it emerged.[19] The notion seems to have first appeared in the twelfth century, here (in the *OED*'s oldest recorded example) in the verbal form:

> Þe eorðliche lauerd ne mei don na mare bote pinen Þe wrecche licome to deaðe. Ah godalmihit Þe mei fordon eiðer ȝe Þine wreeche licome and Þine saule. Swilcne lauerd we aȝen to dreden. Þ*et* is godalmihtin.

[19] In fact, the most thorough philosophical treatment of dread emerges from this theological context; see Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread,* ed. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944). The title is also translated as *The Concept of Anxiety*, as in the edition of Reidar Thomte (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). For a general introduction to the text, see Robert L. Perkins, ed., *International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Concept of Anxiety* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985).

> [The earthly lord may do no more than put the wretched body to death, but God Almighty may destroy both thy wretched body and thy soul. Such a lord we ought to dread, that is God Almighty.][20]

The thematic terms of this construction carry wholesale into early modern usage, as when the "troubled soule" of a late Elizabethan pamphlet describes "dreading [God's] displeasure, whose wrath maketh the deuells to quake."[21] Though occasioned by a fantasy of divine annihilation, the sentiments here are equally predicated on the magnificent power that makes that wrath possible: hence the *OED*'s primary definition "to fear greatly, be in mortal fear of; to regard with awe or reverence, venerate."[22] The affective connection between fear and veneration suggests the multiple, and sometimes conflicting, valences that *dread* variants would begin to accrue in the intervening centuries. In the secular correlate, this basic polarity appears in perhaps the term's most familiar early modern usage: the title of "dread sovereign." The idea of *dread* was thus exceedingly intricate, an affective state implicated in some of the era's primary cultural struggles.

And on the cultural and cosmic level, Elizabethans had much about which they might be in awe, and much about which they might fear. To start with the perennial political crisis of the period: there was never a time, during Queen Elizabeth's forty-five years on the English throne, that her subjects were free from anxiety about their country's political future. After the abortive coup that capped King Edward's rule, and the general uncertainty (and for some, terror) of the Spanish-Catholic rule that characterized his sister Mary's, Elizabethans eagerly sought assurance of a stable tomorrow; the reign's early

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[20] *Old English Homilies and Homiletic Treatises*, ed. Richard Morris (London, 1868), pp. 20-21.

[21] John Hayward, *The Sanctuarie of a Troubled Soule* (London, 1601), p. 102.

[22] *OED*, "dread, *v*."

Parliaments pressed the intractable queen to settle the succession by either marriage or nomination, and before long, pamphlets such as John Hales's "A Declaration of the Succession of the Crowne Imperiall of Ingland" (1563), and the anonymous *Allegations Against the Surmisid Title of the Qvine of Scotts* (1565) began to circulate in manuscript and print.[23] The chatter became increasingly troublesome, and in 1581 Parliament declared a capital crime any speculation into the nature of succession. Such discussion, however, was hard to suppress, and after the breakdown of the Alençon marriage negotiations (1582) and the controversial execution of the Scottish Queen Mary (1587), anxiety about the succession reached new heights.[24]

Elizabeth was childless, unwed, and unwilling to name an heir: and, as the realm was increasingly aware as the 1590s rolled on, she was approaching death. Though history would bring a relatively smooth transition to a new royal dynasty, this hardly seemed certain at the time, as suggested by a pamphlet of 1599:

> Seeing the great diuersitie of opinions, which is found in men of all Estates throughout this Realme, concerning the Royall succession, and fore-seing the manifest danger of ciuill and forraine warres which thence are lyke to ensue, to the notable hurte and domage, if not to to the vtter ruine of this noble Kingdome; except the subjects thereof bee in due time rightlie informed to whom by right the croun falleth, next after her Maiestie.[25]

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[23] Hale's tract is printed in the appendix of George Harbin, *The Hereditary Right of The Crown of England Asserted* (London, 1713); *Allegations Against the Surmisid title of the Qvine of Scotts* (London, 1563). For discussion see Mortimer Levine, *The Early Elizabethan Succession Question, 1558-1568* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966) and Anne McLaren, "The Quest for a King*:* Gender*,* Marriage, and Succession in Elizabethan England*,*" *Journal of British Studies* 41 (2002): 259-90.

[24] See David Scott Wilson-Okamura, "Spenser and the Two Queens," *English Literary Renaissance* 32 (2002): 62-84.

[25] Irenicus Philodikaios, *A Treatise Declaring, and Confirming Against All Obiections The Just Title and Right of The Moste Excellent and Worthie Prince, Iames The Sixt, King of Scotland, to The Succession of The Croun of England* (Edinburgh, 1599), p. 2.

Elizabethans had both the on-going civil strife in France and their own recent history to remind of the bloody dangers of an unsettled crown. "The whole Realme will be rent into as many shivers," Peter Wentworth reminded, "as there be competitors":

> Oh the riuers of blood, which then by these doleful consequents will ouerflowe euery where this noble Island, the strong men shall be slaine in the fielde: children and infants murthered in euerue towne, honest matrons & madies euerie where ravished: then also strong holdes shall bee razed and burned with fire: faire buildings in cittie and countrie defaced, & made even with the ground.[26]

As one of the most vocal agitators, Wentworth was adept at engaging the slippery rhetoric that had long cloaked the queen's evasion of the succession issue. The realm of England, the young Queen Elizabeth had once replied to a Parliamentary petition on her would-be heir, would "never have any a more mother" than she.[27] In the reign's waning years, Wentworth thought it finally time for her to make good on this promise:

> And seeing God hath ordayned you our nursing mother, wee your children cry vpon you, & most earnestlie beseech you, that by neglecting this motion, you vnnaturallie leaue vs not vnto the evident spoile of the mercilesse bloodie sword. And seing God hath honored you with his owne name, most deare soueraigne, take heed, you doe not vnto him, & vnto your self that dishonor for lack of listning to this cousell, contrary to his wil & nature, to leaue vs your people wittingly & willingly at random, to the rage & furie & helhounds.[28]

Only with a settled succession could this royal mother cast from "all true English hearts" the dread of future strife.[29]

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[26] Peter Wentworth, *A Pithie Exhortation to her Maiestie for Establishing her Successor to the Crowne* (Edinburgh, 1598), p. 24; 26. Written c. 1588, this tract was not published until a year after his death.

[27] Elizabeth I, *Queen Elizabeth I: Selected Works,* ed. Steven W. May (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), p. 9.

[28] Wentworth, *A Pithie Exhortation*, p. 8.

[29] Ibid., p. 5.

For his bold address, and his subsequent attempts to organize parliamentary discussion of the succession, Wentworth spent the rest of his life in the Tower, where he died in 1597. It was much harder, however, to quell Catholic exiles like William Allen and Robert Parsons, whose agents smuggled into England works denouncing Elizabeth ("a Bastard, conceyued and borne by incestuous adultery") and advocating the claim of the "Infanta of Spayne."[30] The most notable of such works is *A Conference about the Next Succession to The Crowne of Ingland*, a wickedly subversive tract published on the continent under the pseudonym "R. Doleman."[31] As "an extended exercise in genealogical complication," *A Conference* aims (in Peter Lake's estimation) to "create a sense of confusion and impending crisis by rendering the case for the apparently natural successor, James Stuart, less compelling than it might otherwise have appeared to be and by enhancing the claims of other less obvious and seemingly less congenial candidates."[32] By arguing that blood proximity was not the primary consideration for succession rights, and by introducing a host of competing claims only to subsequently undermine them, Parsons creates a thicket of genealogical branches designed to induce panic in the already anxious English populace. But even more importantly for our current discussion, Doleman slyly dedicates his work to none other than "the right honorable the earle of Essex," as alleged

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[30] Pope Sixtus V, *A Declaration of the Sentence and Deposition of Elizabeth* (Antwerp, 1588); R. Doleman, *A Conference about the Next Succession to The Crowne of Ingland* (Antwerp, 1594), p. 263. The Infanta Isabella, King Philip's daughter, had the distant blood of John of Gaunt.

[31] Debate remains whether the true author was Parsons, Allen, or another party entirely; see Peter Holmes, "The Authorship and Early Reception of a *Conference about the Next Succession to the Crown of England*," *The Historical Journal* 23 (1980): 415-29.

[32] Peter Lake, "The King (The Queen) and the Jesuit: James Stuart's 'True Law of Free Monarchies' in Context/s," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004): 24; see also Victor Houliston, "The Hare and the Drum: Robert Persons's Writings on the English Succession, 1593-6," *Renaissance Studies* 14 (2000): 235-50.

thanks for the "good turns and benefites receaued by some frendes of myne at your Lordships handes"—a source of considerable embarrassment to the notorious hispanophobe, who didn't appreciate the suggestion.[33] But because of the crown's harsh restrictions on illicit publishing, a bomb like Doleman's proved difficult to diffuse. This crux was lamented by John Hayward, who observed that in this textual war "fugitiues did stand in some aduantage, in that they had free scope to publish whatsoeuer was agreeable to their pleasure; knowing right well, that their bookes could not be suppressed, and might not be answered."[34]

If the dread of an uncertain future clouded the political climate of the 1590s, even more immediate was the threat posed by England's foreign enemies, who hoped to rob the queen of a peaceful death. The touchstone for this anxiety was the Spanish Armada, whose massive shadow shaped invasion fears both before and after 1588. That the Armada was "the Worst-Kept Secret in Europe" left Philip with little chance of a surprise assault, but this cloud had a silver lining: the English would spend *years* in tense expectation of the coming fleet, reports of which persistently circulated in diplomatic channels.[35] As early as 1581, news reached England of "the great preparation that the King of Spain was making by land and sea"; it was not clear, however, to what purpose it was directed, and in the years that followed the European rumor-mill had this "hundred sail of ships" variously aimed for

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[33] R. Doleman, *A Conference*, sig. A2.

[34] John Hayward, *An Answer to the First Part of a Certaine Conference* (London, 1603), n.p.

[35] De Lamar Jensen, "The Spanish Armada: The Worst-Kept Secret in Europe," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 (1988): 621-41.

England, Ireland, Scotland, the Indies, Africa, Flanders, Geneva, and France.[36] As the 1580s rolled on, the persistent raiding of privateers like Sir Francis Drake left King Philip and his ministers "extremely anxious to avenge themselves on the Queen of England." But the Spanish bureaucracy was exceptionally slow, and the English could do little but watch the coast for a massive fleet they knew would one day come.[37] As the summer of 1588 drew closer, fears continued to escalate: "I assure your ho*nor*," reported Drake, only a year before the Armada set sail, "the like preparac*i*on was never hearde of, nor knowen, as the kinge of Spaigne hathe and dailie maketh to invade Englande."[38]

The Armada of 1588 was defeated, but this failure did not deter King Philip's martial ambitions. Throughout the 1590s, English anxieties were persistently spurred by rumors of a new Spanish assault, and those on the coast could again do little but "wayte the cominge of the king*es* armada."[39] In the summer of 1596, Philip prepared a second Armada, allegedly of "26 or 27 thousand soldiers"; bad weather halted the assault in October, but England was kept in a panic for some months later.[40] In the next summer, as Essex and his captains prepared their own naval assault, the Spanish fleet was reassembled into a *third* Armada; continental spies sent word that "there are nowe arrived 49 shipps on this coaste, whereof there are 29 Gallyons of the K*inges*," while the Spanish commander Martin de Padilla allegedly claimed that "yf he mett the Erle of Essex...[,] he woulde trye the quarrell w*i*th him

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[36] *CSPF* XV, p. 13; XIX, p. 528. For discussion, see Jensen, "The Spanish Armada," pp. 624-26.

[37] *CSPV,* VIII, 439.

[38] TNA, SP 12/200, fol. 8.

[39] CP 175/117.

[40] *HMC Salisbury*, 7:427. See Wernham, *The Return of The Armadas*, Chap. IX.

hande to hande."[41] As conflict approached, Essex himself gave "some directions for the strengthening and garding of these Western coastes":

> I haue also aduised the Deputie Liuetenants of both the counties to see good watch kept all alongst the Coaste, and to haue theire men w*hi*ch are destined for the guarde of the Coaste, to be in radinesse w*i*th theire armes, and to knowe theire seuerall rendeueus vppon all alarmes, and that vppon the fyring of any beacon all the horses and nagges of the Cuntrie neere the Coaste should serue to carie the best armed and trayned men to the place whense the alarme comes: and where theare is any good towne w*hi*ch was or likely to be attempted to be burnt by the enimie, I haue wished them to keepe guardes every night.[42]

As the fleet set off again, and England was left perilously unguarded, panicked reports claimed that "the Spanisehe armada" was "w*i*thout all question att the sea"; Essex sent "newes of the co*m*ming of this fleete vpon o*u*r owne coste," and it was even claimed by some that the Spanish had already landed on English soil.[43] Ultimately, England needed to dread nought: as in the previous year, Philip's third Armada was spoiled by the weather, to the great relief of Elizabeth and her subjects. This fortuitous outcome, however, only emerged from the waves of panic and emergency that perennially shook the English populace in the final years of the sixteenth century.

While the elements had helped guard the isle from Spanish raiders, the forces of nature also proved a *source* of profound dread for England in the 1590s. In the final years of Elizabeth's reign, inclement weather and widespread crop shortage plagued the countryside, and in 1593-97 an "unprecedented series of harvest failures" dragged the

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[41] TNA, SP 12/264, fol. 211.

[42] CP 54/17.

[43] CP 56/47; 56/38. On October 28th, Hampden Poulet reported that "I had intelligence given me that the fleet was already upon our coast" (*HMC Salisbury,* 7:448).

nation into its most devastating famine of the sixteenth century.[44] The cumulative effect, as one contemporary tells it, was to cast doubt on the natural order itself:

> One yeare there hath bene hunger; the second there was a dearth, and a third which is this yeare, there is great cleannesse of teeth. The poorer sort do most feele it: the Lord haue mercy on them....And see whether that the Lord doth not threaten vs much more, by sending such vnseasonable weather, and store of raine among vs. Which if we will obserue, and compare it with that which is past, we may say that the course of nature is very much inuerted; our yeares are turned vp-side downe; our sommers are no sommers, our haruests are no haruests; our seed-times are no seed-times.[45]

And the poorer sort felt it indeed; rampant hunger led to social unrest, and in June 1595 a series of violent food riots (such as "The disorder for the fish" on the 12th, or "The disorder for the butter" a day later) tore through the streets of London. Particularly vexing for authorities was how this "great dearth of victual" served to galvanize the underclasses:

> About the 16 or 17 of June, certain prentices and certain soldiers or masterless men met together in "Powles", and there had conference, wherein the soldiers said to the prentices, "You know not your own strength"; and then the prentices asked the soldiers if they would assist them, and the soldiers answered that they would within an hour after be ready to aid them and be their leaders.[46]

Throughout the realm, mayors like William Wallop of Southampton begged for relief, pleading that "a miserable want is grown amongst us and a cruel famine is to be feared if some supply of corn be not granted."[47] The crown did its best to distribute aid, but found itself undercut by "the rich owners of corn [who] keep their store from common markets, thereby to increase the prices thereof" and the "number of persons liker to wolves or

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[44] Steve Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 137.

[45] George Abbot, *An Exposition Vpon the Prophet Ionah Contained in Certaine Sermons* (London, 1600), pp. 365-66.

[46] *HMC Salisbury*, 5:248, for this and the preceding quotations.

[47] Ibid., 7:94.

cormorants than to natural men, that do most covetously seek to uphold the prices of grain."[48] Though the harvest recovered in the years immediately preceding Elizabeth's death, the famine of the 1590s left a deep scar on the social and psychic landscape of the early-to-mid 1590s: to existing anxieties about the unsettled succession and foreign invasion, "the harde time of dearth" forced Elizabethans to fear that the natural order had turned against them.[49]

But the idea of *dread* as I've tried to describe it, and as it has been disbursed throughout the discussions of succession, invasion, and famine, is perhaps best conveyed in a single notion that was apparently shared by many Elizabethans in the late sixteenth century: the profound conviction that the world was about to be destroyed. Unlike the more well-known millenarianism of the seventeenth century, Tudor commentators in general adopted a "historicist" approach to eschatology, decoding the Book of Revelation "as a continuous prophecy of the course of church and world history from the Incarnation to the End."[50] As Richard Bauckhaum explains, in this mode of exegesis, Tudor theologians saw Christ's "thousand yeere" reign (described in Revelation 20:4) not as the promise of a pending golden age, but rather as an account of the Church's former period of earthly ascendency:

> The millennium might be calculated to have begun at the nativity of Christ (following Bale), at the Resurrection, at the period of the apostolistic preaching, at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, at the time of the writing of the Apocalypse in 97 AD, or (following Foxe) at the victory of Constantine.

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[48] Ibid., 14:294; 7:410.

[49] TNA, SP 12/263, fol. 191.

[50] Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse* (Oxford: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978), p. 15. See also Bernard Capp, "The Political Dimension of Apocalyptic Thought" in *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature*, ed. C.A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 93-124.

> Accordingly it could be calculated to have ended at various times from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries. But though the details varied, the consensus of sixteenth century commentators was that the millennium belonged in the past.[51]

Because the millennium ended with "the laste corrupting of the Euangelical preachyng and church of Christ" (i.e., with the rise of the medieval Catholic Church), Elizabethans found themselves at a watershed moment in God's cosmic drama:

> And when the thousand yeeres are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall goe out to deceiue the people, which are in the foure quarters of the earth, *euen* Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battell, whose number is, as the sand of the Sea.[52]

Thus Foxe, for example, sets his sights on those souls martyred "in the time, that the reuelaion speaketh of, whan Sathanas, the old serpent, being tied vp for a thousand yere, was losed for a certaine space."[53] In this post-millennial sixteenth century, English believers (armed with the Word) waged guerilla war against the ascending Papal Antichrist and his Spanish army: this temporal battle would immediately prefigure the Final Judgment, in which God overthrows the wicked and obliterates "both the earth and heauen."[54] Many Elizabethans, it seems, looked forward to the imminent termination of history.

In the declining years of Elizabeth's reign, the end was thought very near indeed. The "nature of men," Anthony Marten remarked in 1589, "is in these daies beyond all other ages and times before, so curious to search & inquire for the time of Christes coming." Though many exegetes denied that the apocalyptic moment could be calculated precisely, there was nonetheless a general expectation of "an hastie and sodaine comming, a crying

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[51] Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, p. 209.

[52] Heinrich Bullinger, *A Hundred Sermons Vpon the Apocalips of Iesu Christe* (London, 1561), p. 593; Revelation 20:8-9.

[53] John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (London, 1563), p. 11.

[54] Revelation 20:11.

vnto iudgement, an appearing of Christ in the cloudes, a perishing of the heauens & a consuming of the earth and all the workes thereof with fire."[55] It was said that the "sort of signes that go before our Sauiours comming are very many," and soothsayers elaborately chronicled the "tokens foretolde of Christ" in a series of pamphlets and sermons.[56] In light of our previous discussion, the components of this "preemptorie warning" are familiar: "Our Sauior Christ saith, that before the end of the world, Nation shall rise against nation, and Realme against Realme, and there shall be famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes in certaine places."[57] Authors like William Perkins similarly emphasized that "the afflictions and miseries of the world by earthquakes, warres, pestilence, famine and such like" were an index of Christ's imminent arrival; Sheltco à Geveren agreed that "Christ hath giuen manie other signes and tokens of his comming," including "warres, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, and that country shall rise against countrie."[58] The experts had weighed in, and the results seemed conclusive: the end of history sounded a lot like the social, political, and natural turmoil that ravaged England in the 1590s.

SOCIAL DREAD

In the 1590s, any Elizabethan might have found him/herself under the cloud of such cosmic dread—but for those who *did* play an immediate role in directing England's political,

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[55] Anthony Marten, *A Second Sound, or Warning of the Trumpet Vnto Judgement* (London, 1589), p. 18^{v}; 2.

[56] William Perkins, *The Works of that Famovs and Worthie Minister of Christ in the Vniversitie of Cambridge, M.W. Perkins*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1608-9), 3:470; Sheltco à Geveren, *Of the End of This Worlde, and The Seconde Comming of Christ* (London, 1589), p. 10.

[57] Marten, *A Second Sound*, p. 2; 4^{v}.

[58] Perkins, *The Works*, 3:470; Sheltco à Geveren, *Of the End of This Worlde*, p. 9^{v}.

social, and religious future, the stakes were quite different. In the courtly sphere, such generalized anxiety coalesced more specifically in the rampant factionalism that plagued politics in the declining years of Elizabeth's life. For those in the trenches, the late Elizabethan court indeed seemed a war zone of social violence, and commentators routinely reveal how the envy, emulation, and back-biting that undid Artegall would often correlate with party lines. Sir Francis Bacon, nothing if not a veteran of these wars, observed how common it was to think that "the principal part of pollicie [is] for a great person to gouerne his proceedings according to the respects of Factions": but when "*Factions* are carried too high, and too violently," he warns, it is a "Signe of Weaknesse in Princes; And much to the Preiudice, both of their Authoritie and Business."[59] In the essay "Of Friends and Faction," the literary polymath Sir William Cornwallis reminds the would-be courtier that "love will not, or cannot be universal," and that the wise man "must not entertain the humor of neutrality" in the conflicts of high politics.[60] And Sir Robert Naunton, reflecting upon the career of Queen Elizabeth not long after her death, famously declared that "the principall note of her raign will be that she ruled much by faction and parties, which herself both made, upheld, and weakened, as her own great judgment advised."[61] Though historians in the last three decades have fiercely debated the nature of Renaissance factionalism, "about

[59] Francis Bacon, "Of Faction," in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, 15 vols. (London, 1857-74), 6:580.

[60] William Cornwallis, *Essayes* (London, 1600), sig. E2. Cornwallis, incidentally, was an associate of Essex, who knighted him in the Irish campaign of 1599.

[61] Robert Naunton, *Observations on the Late Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1641), p. 6.

one point," Simon Adams reminds, "there is no controversy": in the 1590s "the Court was nearly torn apart by a factional struggle of major proportions."[62]

In this struggle, the Essex circle was the faction *par excellence*—and its affective experience in the late Elizabethan courtly sphere was largely occupied with both suffering and inflicting what I have called *social dread*. On the cosmic scale, the object of dread was unambiguous. But among Elizabeth's courtiers, this was not the case: despite Essex's *de facto* status as primary favorite, he enjoyed little true dominance over the social domain, and in the 1590s he and his allies found themselves dodging as many whips and scorns as they themselves administered. As such, the struggle for the late Elizabethan court was implicitly an affective struggle over the terms of dread: who is the object of terror, and who is the terrified object? Which party can master the emotional experience of the other?

In fact, the specific ambiguity of social dread finds an analogy in the word itself: with a single word encompassing verbal, adjectival, and substantive forms (itself a relative anomaly in the English affective lexicon), *dread* also displays, in early modern usage, a notable ability to convey both subjective and objective meaning. That is to say, in each grammatical category, *dread* can equally attach to both the *fearful subject* and the *feared*

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[62] Simon Adams, "Favourites and Factions at the Elizabethan Court," in *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 47. The debate centers on whether claims to factionalism have been exaggerated, and whether or not it was a more restricted social phenomenon than has been usually thought. See, for example, David Starkey, "From Feud to Faction: English Politics Circa 1450-1550," *History Today* 32 (1982): 16-22; E. W. Ives, *Faction in Tudor England* (London: Historical Association, 1979); Paul E. J. Hammer, "'Absolute and Sovereign Mistess of Her Grace'? Queen Elizabeth I and Her Favourites, 1581-1592," in *The World of the Favourite*, ed. J.H. Elliott and L.W.B. Brockliss (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 38-53; "Patronage at Court, Faction, and the Earl of Essex," in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade,* ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 65-86; and Mary Partridge, "Images of the Courtier in Elizabethan England," unpublished dissertation, 2008.

object that evokes it. This flexibility is demonstrated in the following chart, which maps the relevant *OED* forms:

dread, v.	Sub.	To fear greatly, be in mortal fear of; to regard with awe or reverence, venerate.	*God bad them to be strong and nat to drede.*
	Ob.	To cause to fear; to affright, terrify.	*A blazing Starre, that dreadeth the minde by presaging ruine.*
dread, adj.	Sub. (Adj. 1)	Afraid, frightened, terrified.	*Theues war dred of Cuthberts wrake.*
	Ob. (Adj. 2)	Feared greatly; hence, to be feared; dreadful, terrible.	*And make his dread Trident shake.*
dread, n.	Sub.	Extreme fear; deep awe or reverence; apprehension or anxiety as to future events.	*The drede of god putteth awaye synne.*
	Ob.	A person or thing (to be) dreaded; an object or cause of fear, reverence, or awe	*Vna* [of *The Faerie Queene*] *his deare dreed.*
dreadfully	Sub.	With terror, fear, awe, or apprehension	*Dredfully sche quakyth.*
	Ob.	So as to cause dread; terribly, fearfully, awfully.	*They tell her shee is dreadfullie beset.*

Though obscured in conventional phrases like *Dread God* or *Dread Sovereign*, there is nonetheless a latent way that *dread* can announce its capacity to be undone, by entailing its own opposition: in early modern usage, *dread* (like the verbs *let* or *seed*) has the capacity to evoke its own antonym, making it what is sometimes popularly called a "Janus word."[63] Encompassing its own binary, *dread* might lock both subject and object in a zero-sum game

[63] See Isacc Goldberg, *The Wonder of Words: An Introduction to Language for Everyman* (New York: D. Applteton-Century, 1938), Chap. 12. I have not been able to determine how this phenomenon is treated in modern linguistics.

of affective negotiation, in which each term, equally *dreadful*, struggles to tip the scales from subjugation to mastery.[64]

Before God and Queen, such linguistic games were hardly helpful—but in a different context, of lateral social contestation, the reciprocity of fear was an important affective circuit. In the 1590s, both the Essex circle and its courtly enemies were infused with *dread*, though what that statement meant at any particular time is exceedingly difficult to sort out.[65] In this social arena, factional politics insured that oppositional parties found themselves both inspiring and succumbing to anxiety and terror. This affective warfare, waged under the dreadful skies of the 1590s more generally, assured that the collective atmosphere of suspicion and treachery was mutually reinforcing, as combatants were locked in a persistent struggle to control the terms of who is dreading, and who is being dreaded. The Janus-faced linguistic potential of *dread*, I suggest, is analogous to the Janus-faced affective negotiations that were being contested in the social arena. I turn now to the specific courtly milieu in which dread reigned, by considering both what the Earl of Essex and his men dreaded, and what dread they inspired in their political adversaries.

To begin, then: why did Essex dread his enemies?

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[64] And as its own binary, *dread* invites any number of structuralist/post-structuralist readings. My investments, however, are elsewhere.

[65] In the existentialist tradition of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre, *dread* is analogously seen as a vindication of autonomy, despite its native associations with awe and reverence. In addition to *The Concept of Dread*, see Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962) and Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology,* trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Citadel Press, 2001).

The Earl of Essex and His Friends

In 1593, the Essex partisan Anthony Standen, writing to Anthony Bacon, thought debilitating illness a worthy trade-off from life at court:

> I do begin truly to bless and commend your infirmity, which if you might receive without pain or torment, I would think you in the superlative degree beholding to it, as a cause to retain you from a place, from whence all charity is exiled, and all envy and treachery doth prevail, and where a prince of the most rare virtues and divine parts is assieged with persons so infected with malice.[66]

Court could be a miserable, corrupting, soul-sucking place, and it was especially so in the 1590s. But it was also critical for Essex, even though it would ultimately destroy him.

As factionalism soaked into the bedrock of the Elizabethan political scene, and relationships were polarized accordingly, the court became an increasingly oppositional, increasingly dangerous place for men like Essex, who found themselves ever more alienated from their enemies and enmeshed with their friends. As explained by Lord Cobham (eventually one of Essex's chief adversaries), courtly favor was becoming a zero-sum game in this factional world:

> Of late my Lo*rd* of Essix doubdting whearupon I shoud bee soe well fauoured at Court, and espetially by her Mai*e*sty hath forced mee to declare my self either his only, or frend to Mr. Secretary and his enimy, protesting that ther Could bee noe neutrality. I awnsweared that noe base dependency should euer fashion my loue, or hate to his Lo*rdship's* passions: As for Mr. Secretary I had diuersly tasted of his fauour and would neuer bee dishonest or ungratefull. In conclusion hee hoaldeth mee for a loast child, and in plain terrms tould mee that though hee affected sum parts in mee hee looued not my person, neither should I bee wellcum to him, or expect aduancement vnder him.[67]

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[66] *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. Thomas Birch, 2 vols. (London, 1754), 1:134.

[67] CP 62/71.

In the political climate of the 1590s, there seemed an immeasurable gap between friend and foe, and in this gulf bred factionalism. It is no wonder, then, that in late 1597 a concerned partisan warned Essex of the forces working against him:

> pardon me, that am and euer will be redie prest in all offices to thy seruice, thow are full of wisdom, bountie, and valor, and dost performe all thinges with much honor, and yet mee thinks thow art least perfect in securely woorkinge thy owne good, which in this age, and tyme of vncertentie, is most needful to bee cared for, but by the way let mee tell thee, thy owne patience, I say thy patience hath continually from the beeginninge giuen way to thy crosses, practised by a dubble faction verie stronge against thee.[68]

We have seen in the previous chapter how shared feelings of persecution and alienation generate courtly solidarity, but the advent of factionalism altered this dynamic greatly. Sidney and Leicester faced a noncompliant monarch, and accordingly manifested a symbolic opposition to manage and reclaim feelings of frustration and impotence. But what was largely a symbolic conflict for the previous generation became unsettlingly real for Essex, who really did face a group of men actively trying to ruin him, and who quite probably had designs for his life.[69]

There was a steady stream of rumor and intelligence that men had "layd secret plotts, and damnable deuices" to ruin Essex and his allies.[70] Some were undoubtedly true, some embellished, and some invented, but each contributed to the collective mood of suspicion, grievance, and moral righteousness that would increasingly settle over Essex House. In 1598, for example, Essex was informed that a network of Jesuit agents were secretly suggesting that "it were a verie merritorious acte to stabb or kill the Earle of Essex if you can come att him"; a year later, he was told that his enemies plotted "to work some

[68] TNA, SP 12/265, fol.16.

[69] That is to say: Leicester and Sidney probably did not fear that Elizabeth would have them assassinated.

[70] Folger MS, V.a.164, fol. 29^{v}.

treson… agans yo*u*r person," and was warned to be vigilant for "any suche assasan*es*."[71] In the final months before the rising, Essex desperately reached out to James VI in Scotland, in a last-ditch effort to secure support; enemies at court, Essex bewailed, orchestrated the "corrupting of my servants, stealing of my papers, suborning of false witnesses, procuring of many forged letters in my name, and other suchlike practises against me."[72] When Essex and his men finally took to the streets in 1601, they did so announcing that the "Earle of Essex should haue beene murdered the night before in his owne house by Sir Walter Rawleigh, the Lord Cobham, and other," a fear more plausible than has often been recognized.[73]

What's more, the fear and suspicion of external adversaries also worked to undo the faction from within, via the possibility that a Judas or Sinon might be lurking in its ranks. We get something of this in an exchange between Gilly Merrick and Henry Cuffe, two of the earl's prominent associates:

> The*n* soe I here some of our ow*n*e famely are very malitious againste vs both, butt esspetaly aga*i*nste me. The cou*r*sses practysed are soe bayse thatt I would hatt my self yf ytt were true, butt I shale better satisfie ytt whene I come then to trouble you w*i*th a tedyus letter. I am very sorry thatt some of them proffessinge relygion can be so malitious. Wee have envy and malyce inoughe, besyd*es* to haue ytt plottyde and pracctysed by thos thatt my Lord vseth soe nere him.[74]

Consistent with the general atmosphere of paranoia in which he was engulfed, Essex was aware that ostensible supporters may have an ulterior motive. "I haue bene many tymes and deeply wounded by practising libellers," he complained during the time of his disgrace

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[71] CP 64/92; CP 68/4.

[72] Quoted in Hammer, "Shakespeare's *Richard II*, the Play of 7 February 1601, and the Essex Rising," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59 (2008): 10.

[73] Folger MS, V.a.164, fol. 24^{v}.

[74] CP 81/45.

in 1600, "who since my co*m*mittment have shadowed ther intended mischeefe to me under pretended greefe or passion for me"; in such an environment, the earl had to fear "the corrupcyon of some of hys servantes that had accesse to hys chamber, who myght take & wrytt owt hys loose papers."[75] Even close friends, Essex was warned, needed to be watched carefully: "take heede, and remember, that christ had but twelfe, and on proued a diuell."[76]

In the 1590s, then, life at court entailed very little security: enemies abounded, and even friends could not be trusted. But attendance on the queen was a necessary evil, and because of the importance of this physical presence, the correspondence of the period bubbles with distant courtiers anxiously trying to keep up on the happenings at the power-center. For those unlucky enough to get them, lengthy assignments on the political periphery (à la Edmund Spenser) were often attributed (though not always rightly) to either royal displeasure or the malice of some other courtly notable. But a military man like Essex found himself in a particular bind: he constantly agitated for a foreign deployment that would alienate him from the very site of political power. When at sea or in the field, he was not at court, and could not control the machinations of his enemies. Even in his earliest years, Essex was aware that the management of such absence was a primary courtly strategy; in 1587, when Leicester's conduct in the Netherlands was under suspicion, Essex sent to word to the continent that he would guard his step-father's interests:

> She hath bene since long w*i*th her counsaile, what is agreed on I know not, [but] I desired her, she wold know yowr enemies and not belieue any thinge they shuld say, yf they layd any matter to yowr chardge that she wold suspend her iudgemant till she did heare yourself speake. I will watch w*i*th

[75] CP 80/2; CP 79/74.

[76] TNA, SP 12/265, fol.16^{v}.

> the best diligence I can that yowr enemies may not take advauntage of yowr absence"[77]

Only a few years later, when Essex himself had aims on continental exploits, it was noted that "his frendes here hathe advised him to the contrary, wishing him rather to seke a domesticall greatnesse."[78] In retrospect, Essex apparently found this advice to be spot on, at least according to an account sent to Robert Cecil; upon his disappointing return from France a year later, the earl was said to be "infinitly discontented," because "he suspecteth my Lord your father hath not so much favored him in his absence as he expected."[79]

Throughout his political career, Essex's enemies would regularly capitalize on these periodic deployments, and thus the thrill of martial deployment could not be detached from the anxiety that accompanied foreign action. Most notably, Essex was off scrapping at Cadiz when his primary rival Cecil was promoted to secretary of state, despite the fact that the "queene had given him a faithfull promise not to doe it, and had confirmed her promise by her letter sent to him to Plymmouth before his setting saile."[80] In fact, Essex was advised to be wary of "plausible offers, which may be made unto you to prolong your absence," and was warned of a "plot laid to recoil his lordship, and to keep him aloof by some new employment, which it was presumed would be pleasing to him."[81] Though the earl enjoyed both general popularity and the queen's favor, this alone was not enough to insure political safety; as Hammer explains, Essex (unlike Leicester) lacked allies "in key posts who could

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[77] BL, Cotton MS Galba D/I, fol. 136.

[78] TNA, SP 12/239, fol. 93.

[79] *Correspondence of Sir Henry Unton*, ed. Rev. Joseph Stevenson (London, 1847), p. 264.

[80] Quoted in Hammer, "Myth-making: Politics, Propaganda and the Capture of Cadiz in 1596," *The Historical Journal* 40 (1997): 627.

[81] *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 2:101.

support his initiatives or defend his interests in his absence."[82] And when the tables were turned, Essex found himself paralyzed by his sense of honor: after Robert Cecil left on a special diplomatic envoy in early 1598, the earl refused to take advantage of his rival's departure, despite Francis Bacon's suggestion that "Mr. Secretary's absence" was a fine time to strike.[83] It was thus a dreadful game that a military man like Essex had to play: were the potential rewards of martial glory worth the risk of leaving the courtly corridors unattended?

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In the daily struggles of the late Elizabethan courtier, there was much to be anxious about. As Essex was well aware (and was endlessly told), his enemies strove to usurp his social power, and some even strove to take his life; he burned with the desire to engage the enemies of England and the enemies of Christendom, but was plagued with worry about how he would be undone in absence. But dread was not only an affective state that characterized social interaction in this manner: importantly for literary studies, the anxiety and suspicion that marked the Essex circle's experience in the courtly sphere has a direct correlation in the texts that Essex and his allies produced and circulated in its name. As Paul Hammer has chronicled, Essex was one of the most highly educated noblemen of the sixteenth century, and his popular reputation as a dashing soldier-playboy obscures the

[82] *PEP*, p. 280.

[83] Bacon, *Works,* 9:96. Note that this volume is also titled *The Letters and the Life, Vol. II*, and thus studies of Essex will often cite this content accordingly as the second volume.

depth of his intellectual curiosity, a dispositional feature that was further cultivated as a matter of prudent policy.[84]

Like that of Sidney, Essex's approach to politics was thus integrated into a larger philosophical and intellectual outlook.[85] And for the Essex circle, this outlook was famously shaped by the sixteenth century's emerging fondness for Tacitus, the Roman historian with a particular knack for treating political corruption and treachery—and for revealing how virtuous men might resist them.[86] Initially explored on the continent by thinkers like Machiavelli and Bodin, and cultivated at Cambridge, where Essex (and many members of his circle) studied, the methods of Tacitus provided a novel way of viewing history for a group of men increasingly interested in mastering the brutal skills required for life at a cutthroat

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[84] See especially "The Earl of Essex, Fulke Greville, and the Employment of Scholars," *Studies in Philology* 91(1994): 167-180 and "The Use of Scholarship: The Secretariat of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, c. 1585-1601," *The English Historical Review* 109 (1994): 26-51.

[85] See Mervyn James, *Society, Politics, and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), p. 387ff; F.J. Levy, "Philip Sidney Reconsidered," *English Literary Renaissance* 2 (1971): 6; J. H. M. Salmon, "Stoicism and Roman Example: Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50 (1989): 205; Joel Davis, "Multiple Arcadias and the Literary Quarrel between Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke," *Studies in Philology* 101 (2004): 407ff; and Hammer, "'Absolute and Sovereign,'" p. 43.

[86] On Tacitus, see Alan T. Bradford, "Stuart Absolutism and the 'Utility'of Tacitus," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 46 (1983): 127-55; Edwin B. Benjamin, "Bacon and Tacitus," *Classical Philology* 60 (1965): 102-10 and "Sir John Hayward and Tacitus," *Review of English Studies* 8 (1957): 275-76; David Womersley, "Sir Henry Savile's Translation of Tacitus and the Political Interpretation of Elizabethan Texts," *Review of English Studies* 42 (1991): 313-42 and "Sir John Hayward's Tacitism," *Renaissance Studies* 6 (1992): 46-59. More generally, see Peter Burke, "Tacitism, Scepticism, and Reason of State" in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 479-98; James T. Luce and A. J. Woodman, eds., *Tacitus and the Tacitean Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Kenneth C. Schellhase*, Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); and Anthony John Woodman, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Tacitus*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). See also Paulina Kewes, "Savile's Tacitus and the Politics of Roman History in Late Elizabethan England," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 74 (2011), forthcoming.

court.[87] Unlike the conventional historiography that underpinned the sixteenth-century chronicle—in which the past was imagined as a repository of moral exempla—the new "politic" history, inspired by Tacitus, sought not lessons of morality, but instead practical wisdom on the arts of statesmanship, which might be put to mercenary use. In an attempt to examine the often inscrutable phenomena of contemporary politics, this new breed of historical thinkers "concentrated on political causation, searching into the psychology of ruler and ruled; and they analyzed the role of fortune in history, and the extent to which men could plan for the unpredictable."[88] The moralism and providentialism of the traditional chronicle was replaced with a more psychological and politically nuanced approach to the "secondary causes" of history: those historical actors, like Essex, who shaped the world through the force of individual will, and from whose example prudent political wisdom could be extracted. Tacitus was the perfect historian for dreadful times.

And with this Tacitean approach to history, the Essex circle found a political playbook well suited to their temperament: as a historian of the tyrant, Tacitus provided ample ammunition for a vigorous critique of courtly corruption. In his 1601 essay "Of Histories," Robert Johnson offers a penetrating description of the Tacitean historical subject:

> Another kind [of history] there is like labyrinths, relating cunning and deceitfull friendshippes, how rage is suppressed with silence, treason disguised in innocence, how the wealthy haue beene proscribed for their riches, and the worthy vndermined for their vertue. These prouoke vs to eschew their viletie and lacke of vertue, and to be rather viceles then greatly

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[87] See S. L. Goldberg, "Sir John Hayward, 'Politic' Historian," *Review of English Studies* 6 (1955): 233-44. For the changing curriculum at Cambridge, see ibid., p. 235 and more generally, Lisa Jardine, "The Place of Dialectic Teaching in Sixteenth-Century Cambridge," *Studies in the Renaissance* 21 (1974): 31-62. For Essex at Cambridge, see *PEP*, pp. 24-31.

[88] F. J. Levy, "Hayward, Daniel, and the Beginnings of Politic History in England," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 50 (1987): 4.

> vertuous: and although they bee distasted by those who measure Historie by delight, yet they are of most vse in instructing the minde to the like accidentes….In this ranke I preferre *Tacitus* as the best that any man can dwel vpon: Hee sheweth the miseries of a torne and declining state, where it was a capitall crime to bee vertuous, and nothing so vnsafe as to be securely innocent, where great mens gestures were particularly interpreted, their actions aggrauated, and construed to proceed from an aspiring intent: and the prince too suspitiously iealous touching points of concurrancie, suppressed men of great deserte, as competitors with them in that chiefest grounde, the loue of the people.[89]

A historian so sensitive to issues of aspiration, jealousy, and popularity was political capital in a social landscape increasingly torn by factionalism. But in addition to its ideological implications, there is another way that the turn to Tacitus appealed to the cutting-edge thinkers of the 1590s: Tacitus' famed style of tough, restrained, and sententious prose was adopted by the politic historians in conscious opposition to the Ciceronian excesses of contemporary academic discourse, echoing Montaigne's call to "fortifie and harden our hearing, against the tendernesse of the ceremonious sound of wordes."[90] By replicating Tacitus' stylistic virility, the scholars of the Essex circle asserted a localized, intellectual identity that mirrored the larger strategies by which Essex announced himself as England's foremost martial presence. Not surprisingly, such verbal considerations fold back into larger issues of historiography: Tacitus offered the politic historians "a style admirably suited to men who aimed at psychological realism and the 'poyse' of political experience in

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[89] Robert Johnson, *Essaies, or Rather Imperfect Offers* (London, 1601), sig. d2-d3. For further discussion of Johnson, see Bradford, "Stuart Absolutism," pp. 130-31.

[90] Montaigne, *Essays Written in French by Michael Lord of Montaigne* (London, 1613), p. 520. See also Womersley, "Sir John Hayward's Tacitism," p. 49ff. For discussion of the relationship between rhetoric and effeminacy, see Jennifer Richards, "A Wanton Trade of Living'? Rhetoric, Effeminacy, and the Early Modern Courtier," *Criticism* 42 (2000): 185-206.

their own work and who admired strong and self-reliant heroes like William I, and Henry IV, and Henry VII."[91]

This linkage between style and ideology would become valuable cover to an intellectual coterie increasingly interested in subversive political philosophy, and increasingly suspicious of prying eyes. For though the Tacitean aphorism lent itself to easy memorization, a key feature of political utility, Tacitus also veiled his insights in famously difficult Latin. Such murkiness was co-opted as a political asset: with it, the politic historians could "conceal their true thoughts in riddling and ambiguous words, both to preserve themselves from immediate persecution and to enable them to await an outcome before committing themselves to a course of action."[92] In his comments on Tacitean style, Robert Johnson underscores this captivating union of masculine bluntness and crafted obliqueness: Tacitus constructs his history, he observes, "with such an art, hiding art, as if hee were *aliud agens*, by enterlacing the *serios* of the tale, with some iudiciall, but strangelie briefe sentences."[93] The emphasis on "hiding art" both reflects the larger courtly discourse of *sprezzatura* and reveals the political end to which such stylistic considerations could be directed.

The Essex circle's fondness for Tacitus and Tacitean historiography seems to have contributed to an intellectual, political, and stylistic *ethos* for those in the know—and it was one underwritten by the affective mood of the 1590s. As such, Tacitus was a powerful courtly symbol, insofar as devotion to his works indicated a series of intellectual assumptions about the value of history, a series of political assumptions about the

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[91] Goldberg, "Sir John Hayward," p. 243.
[92] Benjamin, "Bacon and Tacitus," p. 107.
[93] Johnson, *Essaies,* sig. D4^{v}.

correspondence between imperial Rome and England's own cankered age, and a series of stylistic assumptions about the formal strategies best suited for exploring such matters. In a letter of advice to Fulke Greville from the mid-1590s, Essex himself proclaimed "Tacitus simply the best" of all historians, and this attitude seems to have informed much of the earl's outlook.[94] We know that Essex read Tacitus actively: less than a year after his death, Lord Cobham (his former enemy!) sought to borrow from Robert Cotton a "paper boke of my lo*rd* of Essex notations of Cornelius Tacitus."[95] But it seems that his engagement with Tacitus was more elaborate still: according to Ben Jonson, in 1591 Essex penned the elaborate, anonymous preface to Sir Henry Savile's partial translation of Tacitus' *Historiae*.[96] In this "seminal document of the English Tacitean revival," Essex offers a lavish praise of the historian: he "hath written the most matter with best conceyt in fewest wordes of anie Historiographer ancient or moderne;" he reveals "all the miseries of a torne and declining state;" and he veils his meaning in obscurity, so that "the second reading ouer will please thee more than the first, and the third then the second."[97] The preface is capped with a transhistorical conclusion, in which Essex contrasts "our owne happie gouernement" of

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[94] Printed in Bacon, *Works*, 9:25. There is fierce debate whether this letter was ghostwritten by Bacon, or penned by Essex himself; see Hammer, "Fulke Greville" and "The Use of Scholarship," and Brian Vickers, "The Authenticity of Bacon's Earliest Writings," *Studies in Philology* 94 (1997): 248-96.

[95] BL, Cotton MS Vespasian F/XIII, fol. 290. The addressee is not preserved, but the letter has been long assumed directed to Cotton.

[96] Ben Jonson, "Conversations with William Drummond," *The Complete Poems,* ed. George Parfitt (London: Penguin Books, 1996), line 372.

[97] Bradford, "Stuart Absolutism," p. 132; Henry Savile, *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba: Fower Bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus* (London, 1591), p. 3.

Elizabeth with the Rome that "did suffer miseries vnder the greatest Tyrant."[98] As the decade progressed, this association would become increasingly ironic for the Essex circle.

Essex's remarks introduce the first extended translation of Tacitus to be published in England, Savile's *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba, Fower bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus*. This edition sparked English interest in both Tacitus and the methods of politic history; in addition to its partial translation of the *Historiae*, the volume contained Savile's original essay *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba*, a piece of new-style history designed to bridge the temporal gulf between Tacitus' *Annales* and *Historiae*. Ben Jonson deemed this act of intellectual ventriloquism the edition's greatest virtue:

> But when I read that special piece, restored
> Where Nero falls, and Galba is adored,
> To thine own proper I ascribe then more;
> And gradulate the breach, I grieved before:
> Which Fate (it seems) caused in the history,
> Only to boast thy merit in supply.[99]

But by borrowing the robes of Tacitus, Savile also acquired license to craft a piece of history quite foreign to the moral-providentialist framework of traditional Elizabethan historiography: in Savile's rendition of the Tacitean "breach," for example, the rebel leader Julius Vindex is praised for his attempts "to redeeme his country from tyranny and bondage" by taking arms against the Emperor Nero, who is himself damned not for his moral failings, but for his political ones.[100] As David Womersley argues, the novelty of this reconstruction enables Savile and his readers to explore heterodox categories of political thought, such as the appropriate grounds for tyrannicide, the limits of centralized authority,

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[98] Savile, *The Ende*, p. 3[v].

[99] Jonson, "To Sir Henry Savile," lines 9-12. See also Womersley, "Sir Henry Savile," p. 314.

[100] Savile, *The Ende,* p. 6.

and the necessity of military heroes (not unlike Essex) "making successful, principled interventions in the political life of a nation which, in at least some contemporary minds, shared the same underlying form of absolute monarchy as Elizabethan England."[101] In his anonymous preface, Essex describes the Tacitean subject as "the miseries of a torne and declining state: The Empire vsurped; the Prince murthered; the people wavering; the souldiers tumultuous; nothing vnlawfull to him that hath power, and nothing so vnsafe as to bee securely innocent"—a catalog of horror that cannot help but inflect Savile's prayer, on the facing page, that Elizabeth find "a Tacitus to describe your most glorious raigne."[102] As the decade ground onward, and as factionalism ravaged the court, this connection would be ever more appealing for Essex and his ilk, who found themselves ruminating upon one Tacitean lesson in particular: "that a good Prince gouerned by euill ministers is as dangerous as if hee were euill himselfe."[103]

To varying degrees, Tacitus featured in the political thought of numerous men associated with Essex, including (besides Savile) Henry Cuffe, Henry Wotton, the Bacon brothers, and Antonio Perez. A variety of texts indebted to Tacitus emerged from their collective pen. Of particular note is *The State of Christendom, or, A Most Exact and Curious Discovery of Many Secret Passages, and Hidden Mysteries of the Times,* a political tract first printed in 1657, but written in the 1590s.[104] Though the text has been traditionally attributed to Wotton (who is credited on the title page of the first edition), Alexandra Gadja's recent study suggests that Anthony Bacon is the more likely author—but either way,

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[101] Womersley, "Sir Henry Savile," p. 342.

[102] Savile, *The Ende,* p. 3; 2[v].

[103] Ibid., p. 3.

[104] Henry Wotton, *The State of Christendom, or, A Most Exact and Curious Discovery of Many Secret Passages, and Hidden Mysteries of the Times* (London, 1667).

there is no doubt that it emerged from a follower of Essex, and became "a text that shaped the mental world of the Essex circle."[105] Robert Johnson, we have seen, referred to Tacitean history as labyrinthine, and it is thus not surprising that this text's exposure of "secret passages" owes to the Roman historian; the author reveals how the "Competencies, Pretensions, Titles, Quarrels, and Debates" of Europe's princes have "greatly weakened" the Christian fellowship, exemplified most spectacularly in the tyrannical reign of Phillip II.[106] While *The State of Christendom* draws some specific material from Tacitus—for example, a long description of "the Treasons of *Sejan*, his policies, and his purposes"—its primary debt to Tacitus is the more general thematic exploration of "the bleak realities of political corruption," and of the steps that subjects might take to counteract it.[107] Like Savile, *The State*'s author borrows the Tacitean mode to advance daring views on the limits of sovereign authority, making it "the most unequivocal statement of the legitimacy of resistance by a non-Catholic English author from the accession of Elizabeth until the civil war."[108] As the situation at court became increasingly terrifying, such resistance would prove the only refuge for Essex and his men.

The Earl of Essex and His Enemies

In the 1590s, the Earl of Essex and his associates found much to dread in the political sphere; this atmosphere of fear, anxiety, and suspicion was embedded itself in the

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[105] Alexandra Gadja, "*The State of Christendom:* History, Political Thought, and the Essex Circle," *Historical Research* 81 (2008): 426. Hammer observes that "If Essex and his inner circle could be said to have had any kind of guidebook for their actions," it was *The State of Christendom* ("*Richard II*," p. 12).

[106] Wotton, *The State of Christendom*, p. 5.

[107] Ibid, p. 24; Gadja, "The State," p. 435.

[108] Gadja, "The State," p. 439.

texts that their circle produced. Turning now to their courtly opponents, we find that Essex was equally a *source* of fear for his adversaries: as a popular, martial hero, Essex was an ideal symbol for the disaffected Elizabethans of the 1590s, who sought a champion to deliver them from the social and political anxieties that were catalogued earlier in the chapter. To those who opposed him, Essex cut a terrifying figure, and his capacity for political violence was a grave concern for enemies like Cecil, Raleigh, and, eventually, Elizabeth herself. And in a further Janus-twist, dread *of* Essex equally manifested in the textual sphere, though with an inverse trajectory to that which we have just witnessed: for Elizabeth and her agents, textuality was not a refuge from dread, but rather a source of it, as works relating to the earl risked cloaking all manner of seditious content. That Essex might prove dangerous was an increasing concern for both his courtly rivals and Elizabeth. As events proved, this fear was well-founded.

Why, then, did Essex's enemies dread him?

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The Earl of Essex, writes his biographer, "lived his life as self-consciously as if it were a work of art, and sought to make himself indisputably the leader of his generation by excelling all of his contemporaries in accomplishments and zeal."[109] As friend to Sidney and stepson to Leicester, Essex was exceptionally well positioned to inherit a wealth of symbolic stock; in the 1580s, the model of Sidney became the blueprint for the courtly persona of the developing Essex, who tapped an array of private and public connections to position himself as mythological heir. It was the harrowing experience of war that forever cemented the two young men; Essex was knighted for his bravery in the same battle that dealt Sidney his

[109] *PEP*, p. 400.

mortal wound, and as he lay dying the shepherd knight bestowed his best sword on his young friend. The mythic potency of this exchange only galvanized the existing connections between them, and when Leicester passed in 1588 it was apparent that the young earl would inherit the mantle of the Sidney/Leicester circle. With this pedigree, Essex was poised to seize command of Elizabeth's court and the minds of her subjects: a feature that made him quite dangerous to an aging, weakening queen.

Even in his earlier years, Essex understood the deep importance of public self-promotion—and though this awareness would build him a circle of devotees, it also put him in perennial conflict with Elizabeth, who did not appreciate being upstaged. After the defeat of the Armada, for example, the earl sponsored the highlight of London's subsequent festivities, at least according to one observer:

> I was, however, present at the last review, which was held by the earl of Essex on the 26th, and which I am assured was the best of them all. There was a company of 60 musketeers, 60 harquebussiers on horseback, and 200 light horse. The uniforms were of orange-coloured cloth, with facings of white silk, and several of the light-horsemen had surcoats of velvet of the same colour, trimmed with silver…. A joust was then held in the open field (i.e., without lists), and the earl of Essex ran two tilts against the earl of Cumberland. As they are two of the best horsemen in the country the spectators were much pleased at this.[110]

It is not hard to imagine why this visual display would have pleased the on-lookers, and done much for Essex's popularity. Yet at the same time, beneath the celebratory frame, Essex here essentially leads a private army through the streets of London—a convention, to be sure, entirely appropriate to his aristocratic station, but one that ominously prefigures the events of a decade later. One very important spectator, in fact, was not amused with the proceedings:

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[110] *CSPS*, 4:419.

> Several other gentlemen then joined, and they tilted first two against two, and then four against four; the earl of Essex always running against the earl of Cumberland. When they had finished with the lance they drew their swords, but when her Majesty saw this she made a sign with her hand that they were to cease, but they set to and she shut the window, in order not to see them.

This anecdote exposes a central fault line of Elizabethan aristocratic identity: noblemen like Essex struggled with the competing pulls of obedience to the monarch and fidelity to the autonomous individual will. For a man in the business of self-promotion, it was very tempting to side with the latter.[111] As master of the horse, Essex enjoyed "a supervisory role over tournaments, which he exploited to its fullest potential"; this control was most famously exemplified in the Accession Day tilts of 1595, a fulsome celebration of Essex himself.[112] The queen, again, was not happy at his antics: "if she had thought their had bene so moch said of her," Elizabeth was alleged to have remarked, "she wold not haue bene their that Night."[113]

Essex's less ceremonial exploits made for even better publicity—and though his martial triumphs, in the larger sense, were relatively minor, the victories he did command reminded England of his might. The sack of Cadiz, "one of the very few decisive military successes" in England's war with Spain, was an especially potent site for self-presentation; the Queen eventually was forced to ban the publication of documents relating to the affair,

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[111] See Richard C. McCoy, ""A Dangerous Image": The Earl of Essex and Elizabethan Chivalry," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 13 (1983): 313-29.

[112] *PEP*, p. 201.

[113] *Letters and Memorials of State,* 1:362. See also Hammer, "Upstaging the Queen: The Earl of Essex, Francis Bacon, and the Accession Day Celebrations of 1595," in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 41-66 and Linda S. Shenk, "'To Love and Be Wise': the Earl of Essex, Humanist Court Culture, and England's Learned Queen," *Early Modern Literary Studies* Special Issue 16 (2007) 3.1-27 <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/si-16/shenwise.htm>.

lest a piece of more partisan propaganda undermine the official account she had constructed.[114] Nonetheless, Essex was popularly commemorated in ballads like "the welcome home of *th*e Earle of Essex the Lord Admirall from the victorious voyage of Cales"—allegedly written spontaneously by Thomas Churchyard "vpon the sodaine sight of *th*e Earle of Essex co*m*ming to *th*e Court"—or Thomas Deloney's "Long had the proud *Spainards* advaunted to conquer us," which celebrates the "most valyant and hardy" Essex as a paragon of chivalry:

> "Now," quoth the noble Earl, "Courage, my Soldiers all!
> Fight and be valiant, then spoyl you shall have;
> And well rewarded all, from the great to the small:
> But looke that the Women and Children you save!"[115]

In fact, the mythos of the heroic Essex was enough to spark a fashion trend. During the voyage, Essex famously grew a square beard, and as visual images of the victorious earl circulated, so too did his style of grooming. Within two years, this trend among England's young gallants was widespread enough for Guilpin to mock it in *Skialetheia,* his caustic collection of epigrams*:*

> I know some…
> Which scorne to speake to one which hath not bin
> In one of these last voyages: or to one
> Which hauing bin there yet (though he haue none)
> Hath not a *Cades*-beard.[116]

The Cadiz beard would feature prominently in subsequent visual representations of the earl, and remains today one of his trademark features.

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[114] Hammer, "Myth-Making," p. 621.

[115] BL, Egerton 2877, fols. 16-16^{v} ; "An Excellent Song on The Winning of Cales by the English," in *The Roxburghe Ballads*, ed. William Chappell and J. Woodfall Ebsworth, 8 vols. (London, 1871-97), 6:408.

[116] Edward Guilpin, *Skialetheia* (London, 1598), sig. C8^{v}-D.

But it is not just the beard of Essex that figures in *Skialetheia*. Much more seriously, Guilpin attacks Essex under the guise of that "great Felix," who "passing through the street, / Vayleth his cap to each one he doth meet":

> Who would not thinke him perfect curtesie?
> Or the honny-suckle of humilitie?
> The deuill he is as soone: he is the deuill,
> Brightly accoustred to bemist his euill:
> Like a Swartrutters hose his puffe thoughts swell,
> With yeastie ambition: *Signior Machiauell*
> Taught him this mumming trick, with curtesie
> T'entrench himselfe in popularitie.[117]

As has been long recognized, these lines recall *Richard II*'s famous depiction of Bolingbroke, the man with whom Essex was, and would forever become, linked in popular imagination. For an ambitious peer like Essex, popularity came with the cost of being thought to court it. In a famous letter of advice, Francis Bacon directly addresses the crux of popular support, suggesting a shrewd tactic that recalls the dissembling manner of Guilpin's portrayal, but inverts its trajectory:

> [Popularity] is a thing good in itself, being obtained as your Lordship obtaineth it, that is *bonis artibus*; and besides, well governed, is one of the best flowers of your greatness both present and to come; it would be handled tenderly. The only way to quench it *verbis* and not *rebus*. And therefore to take all occations, to the Queen, to speak against popularity and popular courses vehemently; and to tax it in all others: but nevertheless to go on in your honourable commonwealth courses as you do."[118]

Five years later, the rising itself was to reveal that Essex had greatly overestimated his own popularity—or rather, it was to reveal that popularity alone, in this context, was not enough to rouse Londoners to take up arms against the queen's counselors. Unfortunately for Essex, his popularity was still said to be damning evidence of his ill intentions: immediately

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[117] Ibid., sig. C3^{v}.

[118] Bacon, *Works*, 9:44.

after the rebellion, Cecil railed that Essex's "affability and curtosie manifestated his desire to be popular," while at his trial it was alleged that Essex "affected popularity and to be the mynnion of the people," thus proving his action "was premeditated and had the deeper roote."[119]

But for his fearful enemies, it was not simply that Essex courted popularity—more dangerous still was with whom, specifically, he was popular. Though he variously occupied roles as both courtier and politician, Essex saw himself primarily as a man of war: it was in war that Essex cemented himself as the heir to Leicester and Sidney, just as it was in war that he secured the loyalty of countless men who would serve him in the coming years. And though his enemies in the 1590s increasingly painted Essex as an unstable warhawk, the earl still openly acknowledged his "friendshippe to the chiefe men of action, and fauour generall to the men of warre":

> For most of them which are accounted the chiefe men of action, I doe intirely loue them: they haue beene my companions both abroad and at home: Some of them began the wars with me, most of them haue had place vnder me, and many of them had me a witnesse of their rising, from Captaynes, Lieuetenants, and priuate men, to these charges which since by their vertues they haue obtayned. Now I knowe their vertue I would chuse them for friends, if I had them not, but before I had tryed them, God in his prouidence chose them for me: I loue them for my owne sake, for I finde sweetenesse in their conuersation, strong assistance in their imployment with mee, and happinesse in their friendshippe. [120]

As his reference to *rising* suggests, Essex was notorious for bestowing knighthoods to his men, inevitably to Elizabeth's fury, and often in contempt of her explicit order to the

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[119] Folger MS, V.b.142, fol. 47; Folger MS, V.a.164, fol. 38v.

[120] *An Apologie of the Earle of Essex* (London, 1601), sig. B2v-B3. Hammer suspects that "a majority of his friends were men with whom he shared the special bond of going on campaign together"; see *PEP*, p. 216ff, for further discussion.

contrary. Manuscripts from the period are flush with lists of "*th*e knight*s* made at Caliz" or "those *tha*t have benne knighted by *th*e L*ord* Lyvtenent in Ireland."[121]

In fact, during the proceedings against him at York House in 1600, Essex's fondness for knighting was one of the five explicit charges levied against him. During his appointment to Ireland, the panel recalled, "it was a question disputable & in great consulta*ci*on before his goinge over, whithr by reason of his making so many knight*es* in former employm*entes* he should haue *tha*t authorytye in his comission or no"; he was ultimately granted authority, but was by the "Queene her selfe required to be very sparing in *tha*t respect, and to make very few & those of very good desent & quality."[122] But Elizabeth, we have seen, routinely struggled with curbing the will of a warring peer, and the earl's flouting of her proviso was both flagrant and habitual:

> notw*i*thstandinge w*hi*ch warninge after his coming ouer into Ireland, he made a great number of knight*es* w*hi*ch, being by *th*e Queene very much misliked, he was afterward*es* by l*ett*res in the Queens name required to hold his hande, and yet after the receipt of those l*ett*res, he made many moer.

The crown's fears were well-founded. As suggested by one account of his return to London in 1599, Essex commanded a magnetism that drew such soldiers to his physical presence: "His Lordships soddain Retorn out of *Ireland*, bringes all Sortes of Knights, Captens, Officers, and Soldiers away from thence....[T]his Town is full of them, to the great Discontentment of her Majestie."[123] But at the same time, his charisma was such as to assure loyalty even in absence: only weeks later, he would receive word from Ireland that "the full crie of our

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[121] TNA, SP 12/259, fol. 179^{v}; Folger MS. V.b.142, fol. 29.

[122] Folger MS, V.b.41, fol. 287. The following quotations are from this source.

[123] *Letters and Memorials of State*, 2:130.

poore remnant of freinds is Essex or none, Essex out of hand or all is loste."[124] The ability to command such a following was an asset of enormous power, and it was a source of enormous distress for those to whom it might be directed.[125]

But for that very reason, the sword of popularity cut both ways. Francis Bacon, noting that "her Majesty loveth peace," would famously advise Essex to subdue his "affinity with a martial greatness": such a "militar dependence," he warned, "maketh a suspected greatness."[126] Subsequent events proved this to be sound reasoning. The correlation between Essex's military following and his capacity for insurrection was noted by contemporaries; in the Cecil Papers, one record of those knighted at Cadiz was later annotated (by a different early modern hand) as a "List of names, among which are some of th*e*me engaged in Essex's conspiracy."[127] More concretely, the earl's reputation as a man of arms made it effortless for the crown to construe the rising as an act of open, violent, civil war. Essex and his men, says one account of the indictment, conspired

> not only to depriue the Queens Maiesty from her Royall seate and dignity but also to procure the death, and destrucc*i*on of the Queene, and to procure a Cruell slaughter of her Maiesteies Subjects, to make Cruell wars w*i*thin this Realme of England and alter the Relligion established by her Maiesty and so change *th*e gouernement therof, and for *th*e effecting therof did intend to goe to her Maiesties house at White-Hall her Maiestie being then w*i*thin the sayd house, and by force and power to seaze upon the Queenes p*er*son and to take her into his Custody.[128]

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[124] CP 74/89.

[125] There is an analogue here to Lear's knights, and their importance to his sense of self.

[126] Bacon, *Works*, 9:43.

[127] CP 83/10. While it is tempting to speculate that this reflects gathering of evidence against the earl, I cannot be certain; the hand, as far as I can tell, is not that of Cecil or Coke.

[128] Folger MS, V.a.164, fol. 37.

But nonetheless, Essex continued to assert himself fundamentally as a man of the sword, and insisted upon his natural affinity with other such soldiers. "That generally I am affected to the men of warre," he explained, "should not seeme strange to any reasonable man": "the graue iudge fauours the student of the lawe, the reuerend Biishoppes the labourers of the ministerie, And I, since her Maiestie hath yeerely vsed my seruice in her late actions, must reckon my selfe to the number of her men of warre."[129]

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Essex's ability to court widespread public favor and amass a hard core of military followers made him a formidable opponent for his courtly adversaries; it is not surprising, then, to hear his foe Cecil complain of "how hard termes the erle of Essex standeth to me, and how apt divers of his followers are to throwe imputations vppon me."[130] Essex was a dangerous man to have as an enemy, as his rivals were well aware: "I am not wize enough to give yow advise," Raleigh warned Cecil in 1600, "butt if yow take it for a good councall to relent towards this tirant, yow will repent it when it shalbe to late."[131]

For the Essex circle, we have seen, the dread elicited by adversarial courtly interactions had a textual correlate in literary production. There is an analogous dynamic in the crown's response to Essex, though directed to a different end. Whereas the Essex circle adopted the Tacitean ethos to brace themselves against the storm of political corruption, and the Tacitean style to alleviate their fears of exposure within it, the earl's enemies engaged the literary field inversely: for them, textual production threatened to be a site of sedition and subversion, obscuring all manner of treasonous secrets. Rather than

[129] Essex, *Apologie*, sig. B3.
[130] CP 251/134.
[131] CP 90/150.

embracing textuality as a source of liberation, they found it a source of endless dread—and their efforts centered on shedding light into its depths.

One such famous engagement made Essex perhaps *the* quintessential subject of new historicist literary scholarship in the 1980s and 90s. On the evening of Saturday, February 7th, the night before the infamous rising, a group of Essex partisans (including, as Gilly Merrick, recalls it, "L*ord* Monteegle, S*i*r Christrffr Blont, S*i*r Charles P*er*cye, Ellys Jones, and Edward Busshell") decided to take some entertainment:

> at the mocyon of S*ir* Charles P*er*cye and the rest, they went all together to the Globe, over the water wher the L*ord* Chamberlens men use to playe, and were ther somewhat before the playe began. S*i*r Charles tellyng them that the play wold be of Harry the iiijth….[T]he play was of Kyng Harry the iiiith, and of the kyllyng of Kyng Richard the Second played by the L*ord* Chamberl*en*s players.[132]

With good reason, literary scholars have long explored how this dramatic performance (almost certainly Shakespeare's *Richard II*) might serve as a particularly meaningful example of how literature participated in the working (and unworking) of early modern political structures; the anecdote is prominently foregrounded in Stephen Greenblatt's introduction to the 1982 collection *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance*, a *de facto* manifesto for the budding New Historicist movement.[133] The smoking gun, as the crown

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[132] TNA, SP 12/278, fol. 130.

[133] Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance* (Normal, OK: Pilgrim Books, 1982). On the topic more generally, see, for example, Rebecca Lemon, *Treason by Words: Literature, Law, and Rebellion in Shakespeare's England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Chris Fitter, "Historicising Shakespeare's Richard II: Current Events, Dating, and the Sabotage of Essex," *Early Modern Literary Studies:* 11 (2005), 1.1-47 <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/11-2/fittric2.htm>; Arthur F. Kinney, "Essex and Shakespeare Versus Hayward," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (1993): 464-66; Leeds Barroll, "A New History for Shakespeare and His Time," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 (1988): 441-64; and Louis Adrian Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

investigation would subsequently uncover, is that members of the Essex circle (most notably Percy) actively commissioned this performance from the players:

> S*i*r Charles P*er*cye, S*i*r Ioselyn P*er*cye, and the L*ord* Montegle, w*it*h some thre more spoke to some of the players, in the p*re*sans of this *examinante* to haue the play of the deposyng and kyllyng of Kynge Rychard the second to be played the Saterday next, promysyng to gete them xis more then their ordynary to play yt. Wher thys *examinante* and hys fellowes were determyned to have played some other play, holdyng that play of Kyng Richard to be so old & so long out of vse as that they shold have small or no Company at yt. But at their request this *examinante* and his fellowes were content to play yt the Saterday and hadd their xis more then their ordynary for yt and so played yt accordyngly.[134]

That Essex's men actively requested *Richard II*, a play about the deposition of a feeble monarch by a virile, popular nobleman—a nobleman, no less, with whom Essex had been associated in contemporary discourse—proved particularly enticing for those scholars interested in how early modern literary forces circulated within larger fields of power.

Paul Hammer has recently tempered some of the "more extravagant" theories about the relationship of Shakespeare's play to the subsequent rising.[135] For example, the action on Sunday morning was a sudden response to a newly discovered plot against the earl (thus Essex's men did not purposely commission the play to prime themselves or London for the next day), while the crown's subsequent investigation into the Lord Chamberlain's players was casual and nonpunitive (and thus sought evidence that might be brought against the conspirators at trial, not to indict the public stage). Yet nonetheless, the royal response to the Essex rising still made a direct correlation between the events on the stage and the events of the next day—thus Francis Bacon says of Merrick, in the crown's official account

[134] TNA, SP 12/278, fol. 139.

[135] Hammer, "*Richard II*," p. 18.

of the uprising, that "So earnest hee was to satisfie his eyes with the sight of that Tragedie, which hee thought soone after his Lord should bring from the Stage to the State."[136]

More pressing for the crown was the textual anxiety inspired by the young historian John Hayward—who, in dedicating his *The First Part of the Life and Raigne of King Henrie the IIII* to Essex, would inadvertently bring disaster upon both himself and his would-be master.[137] In January 1599, Hayward published his prose account of the rise of King Henry IV (and deposition of Richard II), in an apparent bid for patronage from the earl. *The Life and Raigne* is a textbook example of politic history in the Tacitean mode, as was noted by contemporaries: Francis Bacon, for example, famously declared that Hayward "had committed very aparant theft, for he had taken most of the sentences of *Cornelius Tacitus,* and translated them into English, and put them into his text."[138] But in fact, *The Life and Raigne* was indebted not just to Tacitus, but to Tacitus *as rendered* by Henry Savile: as Edwin B. Benjamin recorded a half-century ago, Hayward borrowed "phrase after phrase" from the English of Savile's translation.[139] To ingratiate himself with Essex, Hayward aligned himself with a primary symbol of the Essex circle's intellectual milieu: he dedicated to the earl a work indebted globally to the Tacitean mode, and indebted locally to the quintessential English manifestation of that mode, produced by Essex himself and a member of his party. Hayward thus attempts to enroll himself in a symbolic lineage,

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[136] Bacon, *A Declaration of the Practices & Treasons* (London, 1601), sig. k2^{v}-k3.

[137] For a concise account of Hayward's early troubles, see John J. Manning's "Introduction" to his modern edition of *The Life and Raigne*: John Hayward*, The First and Second Parts of John Hayward's "The Life and Raigne of King Henrie IIII,*" (London: Royal Historical Society, 1991), pp. 17-34. See also Alzada Tipton, "'Lively Patterns ... For Affayres of State': Sir John Hayward's *The Life and Reigne of King Henrie IIII* and the Earl of Essex," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 33 (2002): 769-94.

[138] Bacon, *Sir Francis Bacon his Apologie* (London, 1605), pp. 34-35.

[139] Benjamin, "Sir John Hayward and Tacitus," p. 275.

descending from Tacitus, to Essex, to Savile—but such efforts were alarming to the authorities, and made him an immediate target for royal investigation.

Hayward's choice of subject was equally designed to appeal to the earl, by drawing upon an existing symbolic association between the reigns of Richard II and Elizabeth—in which Essex, the source of martial valor, figured implicitly as the usurper Bolingbroke.[140] But Hayward overshot his mark, producing a volume that was not provocative, but inflammatory. According to the crown's later account,

> 1. he selecteth a storie 200 yere olde, and publisheth it this last yere, intendinge the application of it to this tyme
>
> 2. [he] maketh choice of that story only, a kinge is taxed for misgovernm*en*t, his councell for corrupt*ion* and covetous for there priuate[benefits], the king censured for conferring benefits of hatefull paraisit*es* and fauorities, the nobles discontented, the common groning vnd*er* countinuall taxation. There vppon the king is deposed, and by an erle, and in the ende murdres. [141]

Even worse, Hayward's infamous dedication (which was, suiting his Tacitean mode, couched in "deliberate obscurities") seems to link the earl's expected triumphs in the future ("Magnus siquidem es, & presenti iudicio, & futuri temporis expectatione") to the act of

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[140] On this connection, see Hammer, "The Smiling Crocodile: The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan 'Popularity,'" in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, ed. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 95-115.

[141] TNA, SP 12/275, fol. 42^{v}. Or, as Hammer puts it, Hayward treated a "childless sovereign troubled by rebellion in Ireland, facing widespread discontent over heavy taxation, and buffered by bitter factionalism at court and accusations that key royal councilors lacked sufficient respect for martial honour and the status of the peerage" ("Smiling Crocodile," pp. 95-96).

deposition undertaken by Bolingbroke—or at least this was the fear of Elizabeth's agents, who responded accordingly.[142]

Essex, still recovering from a serious quarrel with Elizabeth, and consumed with the enormous task of preparing for his Irish command, did not need this kind of negative publicity, particularly brought upon him by a stranger. No prior connection between Hayward and Essex has been identified, and it seems certain that the edition was intended to advertise Hayward's suitability as a client and adherent of the earl.[143] John Wolfe, the volume's publisher, claimed that his attempts to seek the earl's blessing were thwarted by circumstance:

> this examynate carryed the booke to the earle of Essex, then preparinge to goe into Ireland, w*hi*ch the earle receved, And givinge noe aunsweire carryed the booke w*i*th hym into his chamber….
>
> This examynate sayth ffurther that after the deliv*er*ye of the book to the Earle as a fore said, he went 3 or 4 tymes w*i*thin one fortnyght after… but allwayes this examynate was putt of by some of the Earles men…*tha*t the earle was much busied aboute his voyage to Ireland. And so this examynate never spak w*i*th the Earle after the firste deliverye of the booke.[144]

But all the while, *The Life and Raigne* was flying off the shelves: "never anye booke," Wolfe admitted, "was better sould or more desired."[145] After several weeks, Essex apparently read

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[142] ["You are great, both in judgment of the present, and in expectation of the future."] John Hayward, *The First Part of the Life and Raigne of King Henrie the IIII* (London, 1599), sig. A2. The dedication recalls Shakespeare's prophecy of Essex in *Henry V.*

[143] John Wolfe, the book's printer, would later claim that the dedication was an afterthought: the book, "having no epistell dedicatorye nor to the reader when he brought yt firste vnto hym, w*h*ich this examynate desiringe to have, he this examynante requested hym to dedicatt the booke to some man of honou*r* and reputacion" (TNA, SP 12/275, fol. 45). Given the circumstances, however, this assertion is surely to be questioned: during the interrogation, Wolfe's most pressing concern was to defuse the crown's suspicion that Hayward's book was a premeditated piece of pro-Essex propaganda.

[144] Ibid., fols. 45-45^{v}.

[145] Ibid., fol. 45.

(or was notified of) the dedication; he wrote to Archbishop Whitgift to have it suppressed, who in turn instructed Wolfe to excise the epistle from the remaining stock. A second edition was prepared several months later, with a new preface denying the charge of topicality, but it never reached the public market. This fresh press-run was confiscated in June 1599 under the terms of the so-called "Bishop's Ban," a sweeping crown initiative to suppress books with potentially subversive content. In 1599 Hayward and Wolfe escaped further punishment. But they were not so lucky a year later, when *The Life and Raigne* reappeared on the crown's radar, as part of the investigation into Essex's abrupt and illegal departure from Ireland. During the York House proceedings of June 1600, in which Essex was officially punished for his conduct as Lord Lieutenant, he was explicitly accused of sponsoring Hayward's text:

> a certaine dangerous seditious Pamphlet, was of late put forth into print, concerning the first yeeres of the raigne of Henry the fourth, but indeed the end of Richard the second, and who thought fit to be Patron of that booke, but my Lord of Essex, who after the booke had beene out a weeke, wrote a cold formall letter to my Lord of Canterbury, to call it in againe, knowing belike that forbidden things are most sought after.[146]

The troubles did not end here. Cecil and his allies, it will be remembered, sought to ruin the earl as thoroughly as possible: though the York commission entailed the burial of Essex's political career, his enemies were still gunning for his head. To this end, they continued to plumb *The Life and Raigne* for signs of treason; Hayward was sent to the Tower, and the crown renewed investigation into those associated with the volume. The central query: "who were the anymatters of you to sett forth this story, and to what end?"[147] In the crown's eyes, Hayward must have been the agent of some grander scheme; the book's

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[146] Fynes Moryson, *The Itinerary of Fynes Moryson,* 4 vols. (Glasgow, 1907); 2:316-7.
[147] TNA, SP 12/275, fol. 100^{v}.

content was such, reports Bacon, that the queen "would not be persuaded that it was his writing whose name was to it, but that it had some more mischievous author, and said with great indignation that she would have him racked to produce his author."[148]

Hayward provided no new evidence, but he remained in the Tower in the coming months, as Cecil and company continued to search for a damning case against Essex. As the new year arrived, and tension between Essex and his enemies reached a boiling point, Hayward was interrogated again; in the surviving record, he mounts a fascinating defense of his historical method, explaining his practices by reference to a litany of ancient and contemporary authorities. Most notably, he invokes the example of continental Tacitism to excuse the ostensibly seditious sentiments voiced by his characters: "he sayth that he read it in bodin & other authrs that the subiect was rather bounde to the state then to the p*er*son of the kinge, w*hi*ch he inserted as a matter spoken by the Earle of derby & duke of Herefrd to serve his owne tourne."[149] But despite his assertion of historiographical autonomy, Hayward's fate was sealed only weeks later: Essex's rising was all it took for the crown to authenticate its claims about the seditious content of *The Life and Raigne.* Elizabeth's agents immediately seized the opportunity to insert Hayward into its official narrative of the insurrection, and his book was denounced by London's preachers as a blueprint for regicide:

> it is to be remembered that about two yeres since there was printed and published an history of Henry 4 wherein all the complaint*es* and slaunderous speches, w*hi*ch haue ben given out by certeyine seditious traitors and evel affected subiect*es* against her Ma*jest*i*es* governm*en*t bothe in England and Ireland are sett downe and falslie attributed to those tyimes, thereby cuningly insinuatinge that the same abuses beinge nowe in this Realme that were in Richard 2 daies: the like course might be taken that

[148] Bacon, *Works,* 10:150.

[149] TNA, SP 12/278, fol. 20[v].

> then was for the redressinge of them. This booke was no sooner published but the said traitorous Erle knowinge diverse hundred*es* of them to be dispersed abroade, woulde nedes seme as though he had ben the first that disliked it, whereas he hath confessed that he had the written copy w*i*th him to p*er*vse 14 daies, plottinge (as it will more playnely fall out hereafter) howe he might become an other Henry the 4th.[150]

In the Star Chamber, Cecil made comments to a similar end:

> That such [treasonous] intentions he had, appeared by *th*e booke written of Henry 4th wherein many thinges weare inserted to make this tyme seeme like *th*e tyme of K*ing* Rich*ard* 2 & *tha*t they weare to be reformed by him like as did Hen*ry* 4th. The written coppye of w*hi*ch boke he kept by him 14 dayes to p*er*vse & yett after he knew *tha*t many of them weare dispersed in the peoples handes, he as seeming very carefull of stopping so dangerous a booke sent to *th*e grave Metropolitane of this Realme to haue it called in. [He] would haue removed her Ma*jes*tie servants & in the end haue stepped into *th*e chayre where her Ma*jes*tie now seteth.[151]

In the crown's reckoning, *The Life and Raigne* was a damning piece of evidence against Essex; for his alleged conspiracy with the earl's agenda, Hayward would remain in the Tower until Elizabeth's death. His story reveals the potential dangers of trying to wield the symbolic weapons of a group like the Essex circle. With his unsolicited profession of solidarity, Hayward inadvertently made himself a source of royal dread—and he found out what it meant to cross his dread sovereign.

Finally, the crown was also deeply fearful of the poetic libels that circulated both before and after the Essex rising. The earl himself was no stranger to this genre; in the early 1590s, he and Raleigh engaged in a poetic flytting over the queen's favor—Essex, punning on his rival's given name, memorably declared that "it is to much to thinke, / So pure a mouth should puddle water drinke"—and in the middle of the decade, Raleigh's anti-court poem "The Lie" inspired a cluster of satirical responses with apparent ties to Essex and his

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[150] Ibid., fol. 108v.

[151] Ibid., fol. 80.

party.[152] But as the decade progressed, the libel emerged as a valuable weapon in factional warfare, and seems to have been employed vigorously on behalf of Essex; in the immediate aftermath of the rising, several members of the council include remarks on libelers in their general denunciation of Essex and his men. Lord Treasurer Buckhurst was particularly incensed:

> first, to the matter of the libellers. In my opinion they deserve death better then open enemies; they are dangerous, & who can be fre from their stroake; they barke in secret, and ought to be subiect to the censure of death: there ys remedy against the sworde, against gunnshott *etc.*, but none against backebyters & libellers.[153]

This concern was for good reason: a number of anonymous poems survive that actively denounce the enemies of Essex, in a variety of manners. For example, the minor beast fable "A dreame alluding to my L of Essex, and his adversaries" embeds specific reference to Essex's enemies in its portrayal of "A stately HART" (the earl himself) undone by treacherous machinations: as the fable unfolds, the poet takes shots at Cecil ("a CAMMELS uglie broode"), Raleigh ("His meate blood RAWE"), Cobham ("A muddye BROOKE") and crown prosecutor Edward Coke ("A leafe wee'le have from Co-oake"). This technique is amplified further in "Admir-all weaknes wronges the right," which has been said to offer "a virtual roll-call of Essex's enemies."[154]

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[152] For an edition of Essex's poems, see Steven W. May, "The poems of Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford and of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex," *Studies in Philology* 77 (1980): 1-132. In the section that follows, I cite the texts from "Early Stuart Libels: An Edition of Poetry from Manuscript Sources," ed. Alastair Bellany and Andrew McRae, *Early Modern Literary Studies* Text Series I (2005) <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/texts/libels/>.

[153] Folger MS, V.b.142, fol. 50.

[154] Bellany and McRae, A8.

Unsurprisingly, it is the "Cankred Cecill" who receives the most venom from the anonymous backbiters on Essex's side. The opening stanza of a "Libell against Sir Robert Cecill" offers a representative sample:

> Proude and ambitious wretch that feedest on naught but faction
> Prevaile and fill thy selfe, and burst with vile detraction
> Detraction is thy game, and hathe bene since thie youthe
> And wilbe to thie dyinge daie, He lies that speakes the truthe
> But well I knowe thy bosome is fraught, with naught but scorne.

The attacks against Cecil here recall the terms of anti-Wolsey satires: "First did thy Sire," the poem continues, "and now thy selfe by Machivillian skill / Prevaile, and curbe the Peeres as well befittes your will." In "Chamberlaine Chamberlaine, one of her graces kinn," a poem composed after the earl's execution, Cecil's pretensions are equally mocked in the manner of Skelton:

> Little Cecill tripps up and downe, he Rules bothe Court & Croun
> with his great Burghley Clowne, in his Longe fox-furd gowne
> with his Longe proclamacion, hee saith hee saved the Towne.[155]

Both before and after Essex's execution, Cecil is vilified in the anonymous poems that circulated throughout London. It is no wonder, then, that he was especially incensed that "the Taverns and ordinaries are filled w*i*th tales of governem*en*t and matters of state…w*hi*ch doe falcely and slaunderouslye traytorouslye slaunder her sacred Ma*jes*tie and her whole Counsell."[156]

The crown's concerns were well-founded, at least according to a piece of evidence that suggests an immediate connection between libels and sedition. One week exactly after the failed Essex rising, a cadre of emboldened apprentices had "intended to meete at the

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[155] According to Bellany and Andrew McRae, "Burghley Clowne" refers to "Thomas Cecil, 2nd Lord Burghley, Cecil's older brother."

[156] Folger MS, V.b.142, fol. 49.

Exchange…at x of the Clocke in the morninge," to embark upon a dashing caper to liberate the earl from crown captivity.[157] Though the plot was spoiled prematurely, the crown's subsequent investigation revealed their plan of action: "They intended to drawe theire companie together by Libells w*i*th hope to have 5000 p*er*sons." Without further evidence, it is not clear what form these "libells" took; in the early modern period, the word *libel* had a flexible connotation, with usage signaling both non-moralized texts (the generic "little book") and all manner of written slander and invective. But whatever the precise form, the apprentices apparently thought that that such writings could galvanize London to a surprising degree: they anticipated a turn-out dwarfing that of the rising itself.

Beneath the dreadful skies of the 1590s, Essex and his enemies were deadlocked in an affective struggle, each fearing, and each feared. After his disgraced return from Ireland, and his subsequent destruction in the proceedings that followed, the terms of the contest changed, as Cecil, Raleigh, and the anti-Essex party powerfully asserted their own mastery over the operation of dread in the courtly sphere. In the final months of his life, as Essex was increasingly choked with terror and paranoia, he was forced to try to reclaim the terms of dread for a final time. This attempt set off a chain of events, both worldly and cosmic, that would drag him to ruin.

INNER DREAD

In the early weeks of 1601, the fears of the Essex circle were boiling over; there seemed little hope of recovery, and the chambers of Essex House echoed with shadowy

[157] CP 83/67. I discuss this document in more detail in "Libels and the Essex Rising," *Notes and Queries* 59 (2012) [forthcoming].

reports of plots to ruin the earl. A group of frustrated, alienated men surrounded the equally disposed Essex, and the mutual mood quickly worsened. Sir John Harington, the queen's godson, records a chilling glimpse of this malaise:

> It resteth wythe me in opynion, that ambition thwarted in its career, dothe speedilie leade on to madnesse; herein I am strengthened by what I learne in my Lord of Essex, who shyftethe from sorrowe and repentaunce to rage and rebellion so suddenlie, as well provethe him devoide of goode reason or righte mynde; in my laste discourse, he uttered strange words, borderyning on such strange desygns that made me hastene forthe, and leave his presence.[158]

Though likely embellished by hindsight, Harington's report at least partly indicates the affective toll of this dire moment. On the morning of Sunday, Februrary 8th, the group's collective dread reached a critical mass: after receiving "c*er*yetn aduertisem*ent*e*s* on the Saterdaye night *tha*t his priuate enymies was vp in armes against him," Essex and his men found themselves pushed to a radical act of resistance.[159] As Essex later told it, the events of that morning were sparked by a spontaneous gathering of his adherents, suddenly united to thwart this attack against their symbolic epicenter:

> [To the charge that] I gathered a companye togither and *tha*t by *tha*t means intended forceably….I answere the Company that was gathered togither in my howse assembled themselues vpon intelligence being giuen out vnto them that my life was sought for & that w*i*thout any priuitye at all vnto me these my seruants and fearefull friends in my howse [were making the reports] knowne amongst them.[160]

As this group of fearful friends took to the streets, statements of terror and persecution became their rallying cry. The "Earle of Essex," they declared in the rising's frantic opening moments, "should haue beene murdered the night before in his owne house by Sir Walter

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[158] Sir John Harington, *Nugae Antiquae*, 2 vols. (London, 1792), 2:225.

[159] Folder MS, V.b. 41, fol. 303.

[160] Folger MS, V.a.164, fols. 47-47v.

Rawleigh, the Lord Cobham, and others."[161] Such proclamations served to justify their bold action and incite an atmosphere of collective panic: by assuring onlookers that "they came into the Citty only for safty of their liues," the rebels imagined that London's citizens, equally moved by fear, would be roused to join the cause.[162]

In this desperate action, Essex thus makes a last-ditch attempt to assert his will over his courtly enemies, by orchestrating a final conflict that ensured absolute destruction for the loser. To galvanize his followers, Essex continued to denounce men like Cecil and Raleigh, the "Athiests and Catterpillers" that perverted the queen's will and sought his own life; with this common enemy, he hoped to assure the group's adherence to both "the lawe of nature" and "good seruice," by casting their action as a political purgative.[163] In the rising's aftermath, however, this maneuver would be deemed a despicable fraud:

> The Earle of Essex [employed] false suggesting to the Cittizens & others of violence and murder to be intended and attempted against him in his house, thereby to breed a co*m*meserac*i*on in the people of his estate and danger and to drawe them to hatred of such as he called his priuate enimies.[164]

Essex is charged with inciting panic—a common affective state that might subsequently be retooled into an instrument of violence. During his trial, the earl's alleged strategy is elaborated more specifically:

> why then did you and the whole company goe vp and downe *th*e citty through grac*i*ous street, Cheapeside and oth*er* the Cheefe streets, vpon a purpose to get ayd, and a multitude of Runnigates and Vagabounds w*hi*ch might winde with you villanously to effect that w*hi*ch y*o*u had trayterously determined.[165]

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[161] Ibid., fols. 24^{v}-25.

[162] Ibid., fol. 67^{v}.

[163] Ibid., fol. 29^{v}; 29.

[164] Ibid., fol. 80^{v}.

[165] Ibid., fol. 42^{v}.

The crown's lawyers fantasize that Essex is ensnaring those whom he engages, creating an enmeshment in which his fears become their own (*winde with you*). The affective symbiosis serves to collapse the social hierarchy, as both peer and pauper are imagined sympathetic in their mutual dread—a fantasy that doubly triggers the crown's own fear of sedition, insofar as it links paranoia over high-level courtly intrigues (coups, assassination attempts, etc.) with fears of popular unrest (religious rising, food riots, etc.). The *renegades* and *vagabonds* recall the masterless wild men we explored in the previous chapter, but their capacity for violence is now unleashed by a figure who actively sought their favor.

But Essex's popularity, we have seen, was grossly misjudged. The action fizzled, as London failed to rise (or even open its gates); the party retreated by barge to Essex House, where they staged a perfunctory stand-off, before surrendering peacefully to the crown's agents. A week later, Essex and Southampton were tried together for treason; Essex protested his innocence in a rousing defense, but there was little doubt of the outcome. As the prisoners were escorted back to the Tower, "the Axe was carried before them with the edge towardes them."[166] Here they awaited their sentence:

> Nowe you must goe to the place from whence you came, there to be laied on a hurdell, drawen to the place of execution, hanged and cutt down or you bee dead, then your members to be cutt of, and burnt before your faces, your heddes to be cutt of and your bodies to be quartered and dispersed at the Queenes pleasure, And the Lord have mercie on your soules.

Such horrors did not come to pass: Essex would be granted a more honorable beheading, while Southampton escaped the axe entirely. But with the promise of these tortures, as prelude to the eternal uncertainty of oblivion, Essex now faced a different kind of dread.

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[166] *State Trials, Political and Social*, 3:48, for this and the next quotation.

The basis of *dread*, as I have recently explored it, has been social in nature: Essex and his enemies feared the machinations of his courtly enemies, while his enemies (and Elizabeth) feared that the earl's power and popularity might upend the social order. In the aftermath of his failed rising, however, the Earl of Essex came to know what it was like to be alone. Despite all attempts to rouse her, London did not respond as he had hoped, leaving his action without desperately needed support—and on a day, the most important of Essex's life, where "everything that could go wrong did go wrong."[167] There were, as we have seen, some immediate professions of loyalty to the earl, such as the plot of the apprentices. But Essex himself, awaiting imminent execution, would turn inward and upward. His dread was shifting its object, and the likes of Raleigh and Cecil seemed far less important to him now.

Only days after a defiant performance in the courtroom, the earl suddenly summoned Elizabeth's agents, so that he might "deliuer his knowledge of those treasons w*hi*ch he had formerly denyed at the Barr."[168] In a marked reversal, Essex began to realize that his priorities had been gravely misaligned. And with a short time to live, he had little interest in the profane bonds that linked him to this world, including those that he had forged with his former allies:

> he did meruailous earnestly desyre that wee would suffer him to speake vnto Cuffe his secretary, against whom he vehemently complayned vnto vs to haue ben a principall instigator to theis vyelent courses w*hi*ch he had vndertaken, wherein he protested that he chiefly deysred that he might make yt appeare that that he was not the only perswader of theis great offences w*hi*ch they had committed, but that Blont, Cuffe, Temple, and those other persons who were at the priuate conspiracy at Drury house.

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[167] Hammer, "*Richard II*," pp. 14-15.

[168] TNA, SP 12/278, fol. 207. The following quotations are from this account of Essex's prison confession.

With his eternal soul on the line, Essex was naming names, and he had plans to make sure his conscience was cleared fully. Not content with merely exposing the chief conspirators, the earl revealed that the extent of their intended action was yet unknown to the crown:

> [they] had more dangerous and malicious end*es* for the disturbance of the State then he doth nowe fynde coulde haue ben preuented yf his proiect had gon forwarde, as well appereth by the confusion they drewe him to even in his owne house that morning that he went into the citty.

To be sure, Essex's reimagination of the events was self-interested: here, it is he who was drawn unknowingly into the schemes of these traitors, a bystander swept up in the collective action. To make his peace, Essex affirms that he was not a type of Bolingbroke, but rather a counterpart of King Richard, and thus of Elizabeth herself: noble souls, tragically led to ruin by atheists, caterpillars, flatterers, and false friends. It is thus with no small self-pity that Essex declares to Cuffe, when his secretary was brought before him a final time, that "none hath ben a greater instigator of me then yourselfe, to all theis my disloyall courses into w*hi*ch I haue fallen."[169]

In what is almost certainly the last poem he ever wrote, Essex reflects upon the dangers of bad fellowship, a social cancer so apt to bring destruction upon the godly:

> Ill company, the cause of many woes,
> The sugred baite, that hideth poysned hooke;
> The rocke unseene that shipwrackt soules o'rethrowes,
> The weeping crocodile that killes with looke,
> The readiest steppe to ruine and decay,
> Grace's confounder, and helle's nearest way.

How many good men have been ruined by the company they keep, seduced into an unforeseen fall? Yet in these dreadful days, Essex continues, to be social at all is to expose oneself to the agents of corruptions:

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[169] Ibid., fol. 207[v].

> But he is held no sotiable man
> In this corrupted age, that shall refuse
> To keepe accursed company now and than;
> Nay but a foole, unlesse he seeme to chuse
> Their fellowship, and give them highest place,
> That vildest live, and furthest off from grace.[170]

Essex must indict himself with the same charges of bad company that he had so often levied at the queen. With newfound clarity, he reveals the caterpillars in his own backyard; Essex discovers that the greater threat is not what was plotted by his rivals, but that which he invited upon himself. Royal atonement becomes an at-one-ment, as the earl's empathy with Elizabeth provides means for his reintegration into the unity of her symbolic self—not as a profane sovereign, but as anointed conduit of heavenly grace.

In disavowing his earthly ties, Essex did considerable violence to the social ecosystem that had, with his nourishment, come to flourish around him. Though some of the earl's associates would regroup in the court of James I, the fate of the Essex circle's charter members is recorded bluntly by George Carleton, in a letter written just weeks after the rising:

> You must need*es* here by co*m*mon report of the vnadvised & mischevous action of the Earle of Essex & his adeerent*es*; dangerous to the person of our Quene, fearfull to the state, & mischevous to him & all his partakers, especiallye to thos that were of hys secrett councell & partyes w*i*th him in the plott: wherof diuerse haue allreddye suffredd death, thoughe not w*ith* him yet after him. therle himself was beheaded in the tower first, S*i*r Guillam Merricke & Cuffe his secertarye were after hanged, drawne & q*ua*rtred att Lisbon, & lastleye S*ir* Charles Da*n*vers & S*i*r Chr*istopher* Blunt were beheaded at Tower Hills openlye.[171]

All that outrage, all that turmoil, all that dread, reduced to a few passing lines. Yet, as Carleton continues, there is a larger story here about the frailty of union in this fallen age:

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[170] May, "The Poems of Robert Devereux," p. 56.

[171] TNA, SP 12/279, fol. 45, for this and what follows.

> ytt was strange to see the beginninge of this action (wherof I was a beholder) & somewhatt strange to consider the circumstanc*es* now toward the end. for thes noble & resolute men assured of one an other by their vndoubted valour & combined together by firme oathes, beinge all taken, severed, examined, & the principalls arraygned & condemned, sett in the end before their deathes to such playne confessions & accusations one of an other.

As the social bonds are fractured, the center cannot hold. Once embattled in a zero-sum game with their courtly rivals, the Essex men similarly set upon each other—each man determined "to strive who could drawe one an other in deepest & longest."

Denouncing his co-conspirators entailed a commitment to atonement, however revisionist the narrative that enabled it; the humbled Essex rejected the facilitators of his earthly ambition, turning toward the unifying promise of faith. In a short poem that seems to date from this period, Essex struggles with such reorientation, seeking an account of how his shattering self is refracted in the hearts and minds of the world at large:

> I am not as I seeme, I seeme and am the same;
> I am as divers deeme, but not as others name;
> I am not as I shoulde; I shoulde be as I saye;
> In wantinge what I woulde, I must be as I maye.
> finis qd Rob: Essex Comes[172]

Seems, madam? The poem is obscure to me; I assume that the second line is animated by an implicit opposition of *sinner*/*traitor*, while the final line's *wantinge* suggests the ambivalence inherent in his action, insofar as it might entail both desire for the worldly (a successful outcome in the rising; the queen's grace and pardon; etc.) or the sacred (the salvation he turned away from). But whatever its precise meaning, the affective tenor is dizzying for both the poet and his reader, as Essex struggles to disentangle himself from the countless sites of external investment in which his identity had become ensnared.

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[172] May, "The Poems of Robert Devereux," p. 48ff.

In "The Passion of a Discontented Minde," Essex's final poem, the earl comes to address his sin and salvation far more directly than in the cryptic epigram above—and in this poetic finale, he devotes no small space to establishing the proper object of creation's dread, and the proper way to be dreadful.[173] For though sinfulness demands that we "live in feare, distrust, and terror"—and though "heav'nly contemplation," in turn, yields a "minde set free from care, disrust, or feare"—Essex still praises the "terror unremovable" of the creator, at "whose sterne lookes all creatures are afraid," and at whom dread is rightly directed as an instrument of salvation. Essex was once among those "fond worldings" who "without fear worke Virtue's fowle abuse"—but as he learned to fear, and learned to fear correctly, he seems to have learned that "banishment from everlasting blisse" is our own doing, "because we fled from him we should have served." Essex acknowledges the informed volition that marked his descent into sin, and his descent away from God:

> Thrise happy sinner was that blessed Saint,
> Who though he fell with puffe of woman's blast,
> Went forth and wept with many a bitter plaint….
> But wretched I have falne of mine accord,
> Tenne thousand times against the living Lord.

Despite the commitment to atone, one wonders if Essex, on some profane level, considered himself equally undone by a "puffe of woman's blast"—but the poem's professed aim is pitched quite differently. "I see my sinnes arraign'd before my face," Essex exclaims, realizing that, through the workings of faith and grace, they might be pressed to a nobler service:

> Thou deepest Searcher of each secret thought,
> Infuse in me thy all-affecting grace;
> So shall my works to good effects be brought,
> While I peruse my ugly sinnes a space,

[173] Ibid., p. 56ff.

Whose staining filth so spotted hath my soule,
As nought with wash but teares of inward dole.

To complete his confession, the earl thus affirms his rejection of the world and its trappings, committing himself to the infinite unity of dreadful atonement; "so wil I come," Essex promises his maker, "with feare and blushing cheeke, / For giving others what to thee belonge."

And with this promise, finally, Essex acknowledges the significance of his own guilt, and the significance of the judge by whom it was pronounced. After a struggle to control the meaning of *dread* in the courtly battlefields of the 1590s—even becoming a profound source of social fear himself—Essex is left finally with only awe and reverence for his God and Queen. On the morning of 25 February 1601, as he addressed the English nation for a final time, Essex "gave thanks to Almighty God from the bottom of his heart, that his designs, which were so dangerous to the state, succeeded not"—he had, he assured the gathered crowd, "now looked thoroughly and seriously into his sin, and was heartily sorry he had so obstinately defended an unjust cause at the bar."[174] Having shed himself of his company, Essex promised that "he had now learned how vain a thing the blast of popular favour and applause was."[175] Courtly friends and courtly foes mattered little now; it was only God who

[174] *A Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings For High Treason and Other Crimes and Misdemeanors*, ed. Thomas Bayly Howell, 34 vols. (London, 1811-28), 1:1358-59. J. A. Sharpe has examined how "the civil and religious authorities designed the execution spectacle to articulate a particular set of values, inculcate a certain behavioural model and bolster a social order perceived as threatened"; see "'Last Dying Speeches': Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth-Century England," *Past & Present* 107 (1985): 148. See also Peter Lake and Michael C. Questier, "Agency, Appropriation and Rhetoric under the Gallows: Puritans, Romanists and the State in Early Modern England," *Past & Present* 153 (1996): 64-107.

[175] *A Complete Collection of State Trials*, 1:1359.

might "strengthen his mind against the terrors of death."[176] And in facing the dread of oblivion, whatever strength Essex might muster is attributed alone to grace:

> he bewaylded his sinnes w*i*th the greatest shewe of true repentaunce. he begged at god*es* hand*es* strength…[,] acknowledginge his owne weaknes & infirmitie, adding furthr *tha*t there was no man fearfullr in nature than himself, whereof he had a trewe feeling *tha*t he had passed some danger & trewely knewe his owne imbecillitie. But gave vs for a note *tha*t were beholden *tha*t if he shewed any strength or constancye in *tha*t passage it was to be attribututed to god*es* grace & favo*u*r, for he himself was weaker than anye.[177]

After a final prayer, "beesching god *tha*t he wold not p*er*mitte Sathan to distract him at *that* instant when the body & soule should be sep*er*ared," Essex placed himself on the block, where he "patientlie receaved the stroake of thexecucioner."[178] It took the executioner three strikes to remove his head entirely— but, at the very least, "neither bodie, armes nor hedd ever stirred after the ffirst."[179] During the "tyme of his beinge on the scaffold," one witness approvingly observed, "the Erle never uttered worldlie thought."[180] Essex had learned whom to fear, and Essex had learned how to dread.

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I conclude this chapter, and conclude this dissertation, with the most infinite passage in English literature: for it is *dread*, Hamlet tells us, that bars us from that undiscovered country of oblivion, which he himself is so famously tempted to explore. The "standard, original or exemplar" of Shakespeare's Prince Hamlet, surmised the literary miscellany *Every Month* in 1864, "was probably Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex"—a

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[176] Ibid., 1:1360.

[177] Folger MS, V.b. 41, fol. 315.

[178] *State Trials*, *Political and Social* 3:86.

[179] *A Complete Collection of State Trials*, 1:1360; *State Trials*, *Political and Social* 3:87.

[180] *State Trials*, *Political and Social* 3:87.

suggestion that would be famously explored in the work of John Dover Wilson, and that has been intriguing to modern scholars ever since.[181] The Earl of Essex and *Hamlet* were both hammered into shape under the dreadful skies of the 1590s, and it seems certain that this nativity left its mark on both man and text.

[181] "Who was the Lord Hamlet," in *Every Month*, *Volume I*: *April to December, 1864* (Liverpool: 1864), p. 145 (no other data is provided about the editorial staff or the author); John Dover Wilson, *The Essential Shakespeare: A Biographical Adventure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), p. 104. See also, for example, Lillian Winstanley, *Hamlet and the Scottish Succession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921); Edward S. Le Comte, "The Ending of Hamlet as a Farewell to Essex," *ELH* 17 (1950): 87-114; and, more recently, Peter Erickson, *Rewriting Shakespeare, Rewriting Ourselves* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

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